

## Refugee Cities



# REFUGEE CITIES

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How Afghans Changed Urban Pakistan

Sanaa Alimia

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**PENN**

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*For Moin Wazir*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development
ACC	Afghan Citizenship Cards
AI	Amnesty International
ALAC	Advice and Legal Aid Center
AMRS	Afghan Management and Repatriation Strategy
ARRC	Afghan Refugee Repatriation Cell
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEFARE	Basic Education for Afghan Refugees
BOE	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party (India)
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit (Peshawar)
CAA	Citizenship Amendment Act (India)
CAMP	Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme (Islamabad)
CCAR	Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees
CDA	Capital Development Authority
CDGK	City District Government Karachi
CDMD	City District Municipal Department (Peshawar)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CNIC	Computerized National ID Card
CSSR	Collective for Social Science Research
CWIHP	Cold War International History Project
DHA	Defence Housing Authority
DRA	Democratic Republic of Afghanistan
EEAS	European External Action Service
EUA	Europe: Afghan
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulation

FIR	First Information Report (prepared by police)
GOP	Government of Pakistan
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
ISMC	Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IRIN	(publisher)
ISAL	Informal Subdivision of Agricultural Land
ISI	InterService Intelligence
KESC	Karachi Electricity Supply Company
KHA	Karachi: Afghan
KHAD	Afghan intelligence agency
KHP	Karachi: Pakistani
KMC	Karachi Municipal Council
KPIP	Kissan and Imdadi Package (Punjab)
KSWB	Karachi Sewage and Water Board
KWTA	Karachi Water Tanker's Association
LRH	Lady Reading Hospital
LSE	London School of Economics
MALC	Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre
MCC	Ministry of Climate Change
MGD	million gallons per day
MQM	Muttahida Quami Party
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NAP	National Awami Party
NARA	National Aliens Registration Authority
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED	Nadirshaw Edulji Dinshaw University Karachi
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIC	National ID Card
NID	National Identity Card
NOC	No Objections Certificate
NRC	National Registration of Citizens (India)
NVC	National Verification Card
NWA	North Waziristan Agency
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OPP	Orangi Pilot Project

PDA	Peshawar Development Authority
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PEA	Peshawar: Afghan
PEP	Peshawar: Pakistani
PESCO	Peshawar Electricity Supply Company
PHD	Provincial Housing Department
POR	Proof of Registration cards
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PPVR	Population Profiling, Verification and Response
PTI	Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf government
PTM	Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (Pashtun Protection Movement)
SAFRON	Ministry of States and Frontier Regions
SHARP ALAC:	Society for Human Aid and Prisoners' Rights; ALAC.
SHARP	Advice and Legal Aid Center
SKAA	Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority
SOAS	University of London (study of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East)
SSAR	Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees
TMA	Town Municipal Authorities
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission(er) for Refugees
UNHCR-AFG	UNHCR Afghanistan
UNHCR-BAN	UNHCR Bangladesh
UNHCR-PK	UNHCR Pakistan
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPD	United Nations Population Division
URC	Urban Resource Centre
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VR	Voluntary Repatriation Center
WFP	World Food Programme
WOT	War on Terror



## PREFACE

---

Engineer Aziz was deaf in his left ear. In 1980 he was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured by Soviet military forces in Afghanistan. One beating was so fierce it ruptured his eardrum. He had been a student of engineering at Kabul University, hence the prefix of “Engineer” to his name. At the university, he occasionally attended political gatherings of the Jamiat-e-Islami, a political party that wanted the Afghan state to be governed by Islamic principles. He was interested, he said, in understanding how his country could progress “in its own way,” that is, without being propped up by global powers. He suspects this is why he was targeted by the Peoples’ Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which seized power in Afghanistan in 1978. Forming the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), the PDPA pursued an aggressive program of social, cultural, and economic reforms and, as a result, faced mass resistance from the country’s largely rural population. Unable to garner popular support, in 1979, at the behest of PDPA requests, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, initiating a war that became a quagmire. When Engineer Aziz was in prison, his family and entire village in the eastern province of Kunar moved to Peshawar, Pakistan—a few days away by foot and donkey. Taking him for dead, his family arranged his *ghaib janaza* (funeral-in-absentia). He walked in on the prayers, shocking everyone. Soon after, he joined the Afghan resistance—the *mujahidin*—the so-called warriors of God. The Soviet Union and DRA dubbed the mujahidin as “counterrevolutionaries” and “reactionaries.” In the 1980s, in the context of Cold War superpower rivalries and regional politics, Pakistan, the US and its allies, above all the Gulf Arab states, portrayed them as heroes. Pakistan sponsored announcements on local Afghan radio stations and promised “free land for Afghans to settle on” so they could flee the violence of the communist regime. They also funded and trained Afghans in Pakistan in guerrilla warfare against the Soviet Union and DRA.

Pakistani officials encouraged Afghans to move to areas in Pakistan that bordered Afghanistan: the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (now

integrated into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously the North West Frontier Province [NWFP]), and Balochistan, areas in which Pashtuns were a majority or a sizable presence. When Afghans started to move en masse to Pakistan, the government, in the language of international humanitarianism, defined them as refugees, but also framed them as a part of a monolithic “traditional,” “tribal” Afghan/Pashtun society. The war and subsequent refugee crisis was represented as an Afghan/Pashtun affair, epithets used interchangeably in a manner reminiscent of colonial-era governance. Most Afghans moving into Pakistan were ethnically Pashtun and would be managed by the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), which, until then, was mainly concerned with the FATA.

In the 1980s, leaders of mujahidin were famously received at dinners by government officials in Islamabad and the White House in Washington, DC. A multi-million-dollar US box office hit, *Rambo III*, engaged in the usual (US) American savior-complex whilst also glorifying the insurgency. In the film, the protagonist John Rambo, a hypermasculine US veteran of the Vietnam war, sits before a council of Afghan resistance fighters and is told by one of them: “What you see here are the mujahidin soldiers. Holy warriors. To us this war is a Holy War. And there is no true death for the mujahidin because we have taken our last rites and we consider ourselves dead already. To us, death for our land and God is an honor.”

In Pakistan, General Zia ul Haq’s military regime ensured the Pakistani state-owned broadcaster, PTV, portrayed the mujahidin in similarly heroic terms. In alignment with Zia’s jingoism and religiosity, official propaganda depicted the refugees’ struggle as comparable with the *hijrat*, the flight of Muslims in seventh-century Arabia from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina): Afghans were the *muhajirin* (refugees) and Pakistanis the *ansar* (helpers).

For most Afghans, including those who fought in the war, life bore little resemblance to popular images at the time. Engineer Aziz’s role as a “holy warrior” entailed manning a desk in an office in Peshawar. Fighting in Afghanistan was intermittent and not lucrative—he received extra soap rations for his efforts, and if he was lucky extra oil and sugar, but little else. The World Food Programme (WFP) was giving out rations too, but this was not enough to feed his family: his wife Farah, a woman from his village in Afghanistan and their five children. So, Engineer Aziz took other jobs. He worked as a day laborer electrician, an agricultural laborer, a *chawkidar* (security guard), and a construction worker—jobs he continued after the war. Some local Pakistanis, he told me, complained that Afghans, working longer hours and for less

money, were driving down wages. Others gave free land for Afghans to live on. Others still offered Afghans rooms and homes to rent and employment. Engineer Aziz says he met all types of people; but by and large, “people in the city accepted us, with care.”

In 2010, I started my research by trying to reconstruct microhistories of Afghans in Pakistan with a focus on two cities: Karachi and Peshawar. In Peshawar, Engineer Aziz was one of my main interlocutors. My first meeting with him was in the headteacher’s office of a primary school in the refugee camp he lived in, one of the 54 camps still present across the country (at the peak of the conflict there were over 330 camps in Pakistan). The camp is located in the outskirts of the city; its backdrop is the mountainous Mohmand district, which borders Afghanistan and until 2018 was a part of the FATA. A part of the Kabul River, which is prone to flooding, cuts through the camp. A semifunctioning footbridge connects different parts of the camp to the other side of the river, but is so weathered that people attempting to walk over it regularly fall in. When I was there, a woman twisted her ankle; a boy fell in. (He survived—apparently this was not always the case.) One side of the camp is surrounded by agricultural land; the other leads to a busy road that connects the locality to the city or rural areas (depending on the direction you take).

At the height of the Soviet-Afghan war, even though Afghans were welcomed in the country, the Pakistani state never wanted them to be a permanent presence. Theoretically, Pakistani citizenship laws offer the possibility of naturalization and state that anyone born in Pakistan after 1951 is eligible for citizenship (*jus soli*, citizenship right of the soil). In practice, however, this was never realizable, other than for Afghan women who marry Pakistani men. In an interview in 2015 with the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), which sits under SAFRON and is responsible for managing Afghans, I was told, “Let me be candid. It [naturalization] is not going to happen. There is absolutely no way. Naturalization is not an option. Local integration is not on the cards.”

In the 1980s, in order to receive rations, Engineer Aziz, like other household heads, was issued with a refugee identity number and a paper ration passbook, popularly called the *shanakhti* (identity) pass. The *shanakhti* pass included a disclaimer printed on the back: “Is pass buk se Pakistan ka shehriyat ka haq nahin hota” (the passbook does not entitle Pakistani citizenship). The text also said that the *shanakhti* pass is to be returned when the family leaves Pakistan. When Engineer Aziz moved to Pakistan, in line with

government recommendations, the homes he and others built were built as temporary structures—tarpaulin tents rather than mud or concrete homes.

When Engineer Aziz's village moved to Peshawar, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and policy makers classified movements of entire villages as "cluster movements." Here villages moved together and relocated to Pakistan. The ways in which homes were constructed and spatially organized often reproduced village structures in Afghanistan. In interviews with officials, I was told how certain refugee camps were a "mini-Kabul (province)" or a "mini-Afghanistan." These statements socially and spatially separate the Afghan experience in Pakistan from that of the "native" population, downplaying its broader impact on, or interaction with, Pakistani space and society. Yet neither refugee camps nor other housing settlements were simple replications of Afghan villages. If refugee homes were initially tents, with low mud walls, they morphed into much bigger mud- and stone-walled structures—multiroomed houses within high-walled compounds that expanded the population density and boundaries of cities such as Peshawar. Wealthier Afghans, despite legal restrictions, bought property in Peshawar and other cities in Pakistan, including Rawalpindi, Karachi, and Quetta. Less affluent Afghans of rural backgrounds moved to other parts of Pakistan, including the Punjab and Sindh. This migrant majority, not content with confinement to their "mini-Kabuls" slowly worked to improve their lives through recourse to rights and resources in the localities and cities in which they settled. Through these processes they have created attachments to place and carved out a sense of belonging and new urban identities; they have become urban citizens who claim the towns and cities in which they live as their own.

In the 1980s Engineer Aziz worked with others to transform temporary accommodation (tents) to better forms of housing. He also worked to get residents access to water, gas, and electricity and to build and fix housing structures, alleyways, drainage and sewage lines, and the roads that lead into the camp. Today the camp looks just like any other low-income informal *katcha* (mud/unfinished) housing settlement at the rural-to-urban interface of Peshawar—it is difficult to know where the refugee camp ends and informal housing areas begin. The area is also home to Pakistanis.

Shifting geopolitics, however, have had a dramatic impact on the Afghan experience in Pakistan and their sense of security in the country. The lives of my research subjects have unfolded between and across two massive global wars: the Soviet-Afghan war and the War on Terror (WOT)—the latter of which started in Afghanistan with a US-led invasion after the Taliban were



blamed for hosting Al-Qaeda, the perpetrators of the September 11, New York Twin Tower attacks. The book stops before the dramatic August 2021 Taliban recapture of Afghanistan, which began as the publication of this manuscript was underway.

During the WOT, direct conflict spilled over into Pakistan, which had allied itself to the US. The Pakistani army, in the course of military operations, has been accused of mass human rights abuses. Terrorist violence has also been widespread, peaking between 2004 and 2017—a very long “peak,” when much of the fieldwork for this book was completed.

During the Soviet-Afghan war, an Afghan presence and a shared “Afghan”/“Pashtun” borderland was considered an asset by the Pakistani state (even if Afghans were not permitted to become citizens) and its superpower ally. By the WOT it had become a liability. As violence peaked, Afghans found themselves scapegoated by government and military officials—a tactic also applied to Pakistani citizens living in predominantly Pashtun areas. Since the first decade of this century, Pakistan has sought to harden its border with Afghanistan, by actively—and often coercively—encouraging Pakistan’s large numbers of Afghans “return” to Afghanistan. As this book goes to print, it is too early and beyond the scope of this study to know the full dimensions of the Taliban’s return to power. Yet even a cursory glance shows Pakistan is following the same pattern of trying to prevent, deter, and reverse the Afghan presence in the country.

In 2017 Engineer Aziz died from pneumonia. He was sixty years old. Upon his death, his sons buried their father’s body in the family graveyard in his village in Kunar (Afghanistan). In many ways, Engineer Aziz never completely separated his identity or cultural practices from Afghanistan. For him and other Afghans in Pakistan, especially those from rural backgrounds and who were the first generation to migrate, burial and marriage practices, *gham-khadi* (sorrow and joy), often took place in ancestral villages, towns, and city neighborhoods in Afghanistan. He also retained an emotional attachment to the Afghan nation-state. “It is my country,” he would say. Yet after the death of his first wife, Engineer Aziz had married a Pakistani woman, Nilam, from Charsadda, a small city in the Peshawar valley, with whom he had a son—a baby when we first met. His oldest son from Farah, Mustafa, was born in Peshawar and studied at Charsadda University, where he met the woman he would go on to marry, a Pakistani Pashtuna from Charsadda. Mustafa moved to Europe after getting a scholarship for postgraduate studies—we would meet there for the first time. For Mustafa, a second-generation Afghan, it was

Peshawar he imagined as the home he would return to. He and his wife had saved enough to build a house outside the refugee camp in which they were born. The other two sons were not married; one was working for an NGO in Kabul, the other a day laborer in Pakistan and Afghanistan. For these brothers, economic prospects determined where they lived. Both Engineer Aziz's daughters married Pakistani Pashtun men—they were the sons of friends Engineer Aziz had made while working in Peshawar. Two of his own brothers were living in Punjab province, where they had settled and were working as day laborers. Engineer Aziz and his family had formed social networks, relationships, and solidarities with both Afghans and Pakistanis in the course of their lives and experiences in Pakistan. Marriage practices in Pashtun societies are often organized along patrilineal lines within a family, or at least a tribe, but Engineer Aziz and his children broke with these practices—many others have done the same. Engineer Aziz and his family's social, cultural, and economic worlds were connected to Pakistanis. Engineer Aziz was also unequivocally clear that he, and other Afghans, first, second, and third generations, had a right to live in Peshawar, for they had contributed significantly to the transformation of the physical, ecological, and social landscape of the city. "We built this city," Engineer Aziz had told me, "this is our home."

## INTRODUCTION

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### Refugee Cities

Though the wealthy drink water from a golden cup;  
I prefer this clay bowl of mine.

Though Aurangzeb feels proud of his throne in Delhi;  
The house of every beggar is a Delhi for him.

When a traveler leaves his home;  
Who knows if he is nobleman or slave?

Once he becomes earth mixed with earth,  
Then who can tell whose grandchild he is?

—Rahman Baba (1650–1715),  
“A Dog of the Beloved’s Street”

This book is a history of Afghan migration to urban Pakistan since the 1970s. In this period, millions of Afghans have lived in Pakistan, forming one of the world’s largest refugee populations. They have done so, for the most part, without being naturalized as citizens. Their presence is often framed as alien and the norms of the international state system assume that Afghans in Pakistan should and will return to their national homeland.<sup>1</sup> Despite not being citizens, however, Afghans have claimed and accessed rights and resources in the cities of which they are a part. In this process, they have developed attachments to the places in which they live, and to the people alongside whom they live. Their struggles, which are a crucial, neglected dimension of Pakistan’s urban history, are reflective of how Pakistan’s longer-term Afghan population are not an alien cohort, waiting to go home, but rather are an important

part of Pakistani society. Despite being denied access to citizenship, and the precarious terms of their residency, Afghans have contributed to the forging of new local, urban identities and demands for rights that cut across national and ethnic lines. Thus these Afghans emerge as urban citizens in Pakistan, at home, not in the nation, but in the local neighborhoods and cities in which they reside. Their attachments to place reflect dimensions of belonging based on moral and humanistic frames that challenge the legal powers that seek to exclude them.

In order to get access to basic goods and rights such as water, housing, and sanitation lines, most Afghans must rely on the so-called informal sphere. Informality—the production of legal goods and services that are not formally provided, protected, and regulated by the state—is an essential lifeline for most people. Scholarship on cities in the Global South has established that marginalized populations rely on the “informal sphere” to claim rights of access to resources.<sup>2</sup> It is also, we are told, not separate from the formal, nor a space outside of “modernity,” but coterminous with it.<sup>3</sup> In this book, I show how the Pakistani state encourages informality as a way to manage populations it cannot and does not always want to directly engage with—both noncitizens and citizens—particularly with respect to matters of social welfare. In Pakistan, as is the case in India, Egypt, Brazil, Ghana, and other countries of the Global South where there is a rich body of work on urban informality, the urban poor live shared precarious lives in which the informal sphere is a crucial lifeline for their survival.<sup>4</sup> Yet as noncitizens, Afghans face an additional set of constraints in the informal sphere. As noncitizens, even the informal sphere is extra precarious for them: they are more vulnerable to exploitation within it or they are policed with the intention of encouraging them to leave the country and return to their national homeland.

The Afghan experience in Pakistan has been profoundly shaped by geopolitics. Throughout much of the 1970s–1990s, the Pakistani state welcomed an Afghan presence as a way of exerting political influence in Afghanistan. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, in the context of the War on Terror (WOT) and continuing rivalry with Afghanistan, however, the Pakistani state, alongside the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and other international partners, has advanced an agenda of Afghan refugee repatriation; Afghans are being told they are no longer welcome in the country. Under coercive pressure, many have left. In 2017, Human Rights Watch said Pakistan was engaged in on the world’s “largest unlawful mass forced return of refugees.”<sup>5</sup> But many Afghans have remained

in the country, underlining the limit of the state's ability to repatriate Afghans. In this gap between the state's professed aims and ground realities, Afghans live a precarious existence. Neither legally included as citizens nor fully excluded, they occupy a zone of quasi belonging. They are socially accepted by the people they live with and alongside, yet recognition of their existence in legal and political terms is resisted by the state. Drawing on the testimonies and lives of ordinary people, this book tells the story of the ways in which the terms of their belonging are negotiated and contested, and its impact on the Pakistani cities in which Afghans have settled.

### **Pakistan's Migration Stories**

Pakistan's most famous migration story follows the 1947 independence of India and Pakistan from British colonial rule that included the partition of the Indian subcontinent. Partition created the twentieth century's second largest displacement of people after World War II in Europe. Between one and four million people were killed during partition and another twenty million displaced. Those who moved across the newly formed nation-states' borders transformed cities and understandings of citizenship and territoriality across the subcontinent.

Before 1947 ideas of what citizenship might look like for migrants were not a major concern of the different parties calling for independence. Historian Ayesha Jalal has famously argued a territorial partition was not anticipated by those who are understood as its primary advocates, namely Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League, that is the so-called protagonists of Pakistan.<sup>6</sup> When independence was officially declared, people on the ground, Muslims in Hindu-majority areas of the subcontinent and Hindus and Sikhs in Muslim-majority areas, were unsure as to where they should be: stay put or seek refuge with their co-religionists? Sadat Hassan Manto's literary classic *Toba Tek Singh* remains a timeless and poignant indictment of partition.<sup>7</sup> Yet historian Joya Chatterji shows how refugees who found themselves in the newly established nation-states were able to shape their destiny in important ways.<sup>8</sup> While both states muddled through the shock of partition, Muslim refugees in Pakistan and Sikh and Hindu refugees in India claimed rights in their new "religious" homelands through their own actions—in processes of integration that took place in cities such as New Delhi, Lahore, and Karachi.<sup>9</sup> Land grabs, squatting, defiance of official decrees, and moral claims made

by refugees (usually on the evacuated property of former city dwellers) were common.<sup>10</sup> Citizenship was not a legal status bestowed by the state upon those who resided in its territories, but was rather claimed as a right by new sets of displaced persons along lines of religious identity—this also had implications for religious minorities in the new nation-states, who were treated as potential fifth columns.<sup>11</sup> However, while refugees became formal citizens of their new states, there was a limit to their acceptance. As Vazira Zamindar shows, by 1951 India stopped the blanket acceptance of Hindu and Sikh refugees as citizens; Pakistan did the same for Muslim refugees. Both states instead moved toward a territorial definition of citizenship.<sup>12</sup>

Yet since 1947, large scale migration has remained a central feature of the subcontinent. In the case of Pakistan, there have been decades of research into outward Pakistani migration, diaspora, remittances, and transnational mobility to Britain,<sup>13</sup> Europe,<sup>14</sup> and the Gulf Arab states.<sup>15</sup> There is also a rich body of work on earlier, precolonial and colonial migrations from and within the subcontinent that pushes us to imagine regional and global processes and identities beyond the nation-state.<sup>16</sup> But, apart from some important exceptions,<sup>17</sup> we know much less about Pakistan's internal migration circuits and regional migrations of noncitizens *into* Pakistan. This is surprising given that Pakistan hosts some of the highest numbers of refugees, displaced persons, and undocumented migrants in the world.

At its peak, by around 2005, it is estimated that seven to eight million Afghans were living in Pakistan—mainly in urban areas.<sup>18</sup> Today the figure is between two-and-a-half and three million. In addition, over one million Bangladeshis, primarily from low-income backgrounds, live in Karachi with the status of undocumented migrants.<sup>19</sup> In 1971 East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan and became Bangladesh, yet Bangladeshis still moved to Pakistan in search of work or because of existing family and social ties.<sup>20</sup> Since the first decade of the twenty-first century, tens of thousands of Rohingya have also fled discrimination and ethnic cleansing in Myanmar and settled in Karachi.<sup>21</sup> There are also pockets of undocumented Sri Lankan, Somali, Thai, Filipino, Iranian, Iraqi, and Yemeni migrants (individuals and communities) in major cities across the country.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to these regional migrations, millions of Pakistani citizens are periodically displaced and made landless or homeless within Pakistan due to conflict, political persecution, ecological disasters, and economic and infrastructural development. From the 1960s, the introduction of new technologies and state-led agrarian development via the so-called Green Revolution

have led to massive displacements, above all from rural Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By the 1980s and 1990s, rural flight to the cities was accelerated because of structural adjustment programs implemented by international financial institutions.<sup>23</sup> Since the 1970s, military campaigns against an ethnonationalist mobilization and insurgency in Balochistan province has led to migrations toward other cities in the country or exile from Pakistan. Since the WOT started in 2001, over five million people have been internally displaced from Pakistan's northwestern, predominantly Pashtun, areas.<sup>24</sup> Many have migrated toward major cities such as Peshawar, Karachi, and Islamabad. Meanwhile, the devastating nationwide floods of 2010 affected some eighteen million people, with twelve million people's homes destroyed.<sup>25</sup>

### **A New Language of Rights: *Insani Haquq* in the City**

What do the lives of these various international, regional, and internal migrants tell us about mobility, citizenship, urbanity, and belonging in the postcolonial state today? This book explores how they are leading to new urban identities that are less about nationality, ethnicity, and “imagined communities,”<sup>26</sup> than basic rights—quite literally, having a roof over your head, access to water, sanitation, and food. The framing of these rights is less about ethnic or religious identity or claims of belonging to a territorial homeland, as was the case for Chatterji's refugees of partition.<sup>27</sup> Instead, these claims are made using a language of human needs and rights, and stem from an awareness of the way in which the labor of these populations contributes to the cities in which they reside and have transformed them in size, culture, and economics.

In the formation of new urban identities, inevitably the space, culture, and economics of the city itself have a crucial role. Pakistan is the world's sixth largest country in terms of population (it has an estimated 220 million people). It has the fastest rate of urbanization in South Asia. By 2025, 50 percent of the country's population will live in urban centers.<sup>28</sup> Pakistani policy makers boast of constructing “sustainable cities” (Islamabad)<sup>29</sup> or “world class” cities (Karachi),<sup>30</sup> as they seek to replicate models imported from the Gulf, shaped as they are by consumerism, finance capital, and a neoliberal vision of Islam. Thanks to the so-called Dubai effect,<sup>31</sup> the postcolonial city no longer looks only to the former metropole for a vision of modernity. Unlike the Gulf Arab states, however, Pakistan does not have an oil-rich economy

and miniscule populations that can easily be catered for by the state. In Pakistan, as is the case elsewhere in the Global South, urbanization has been “radically decoupled from industrialization, even from development per se.”<sup>32</sup> In Pakistan, when the poor and jobless migrants end up in cities, “they find neither jobs in the formal sector nor affordable housing” and “with no other alternative, they tend to become part of the sprawling, ever-expanding network of squatters’ slums.”<sup>33</sup> Yet as this book shows, this growing informal sphere is not simply shaped by helplessness; instead it is home to large populations seeking to improve their lives and reclaim a humanity denied them.

In the modern political system, citizenship and nationality are central to membership in society. The radical idea of the French Revolution that all people are equal as citizens laid the foundations for a break with the social hierarchies that had hitherto ordered French society and were considered “ordained by God.”<sup>34</sup> (At the time of the French Revolution, however, citizenship was not extended to enslaved persons in the Americas, indigenous persons, colonial subjects, and women—even if liberal ideas of citizenship would inspire liberation movements across the globe.) But universalistic inclusion within the nation-state is also based on the subordination of those who are categorized as nonmembers,<sup>35</sup> and denied to those who do not belong (refugees, undocumented migrants, and legal foreigners). In other words, citizenship is and always has been, ultimately, exclusionary. One answer to this was meant to have emerged through a language and practice of universal human rights. Scholars of anti-colonialism, indigenous studies, and critical whiteness studies, however, have shown the limits of the international human rights framework as it emerges through a Euro-American tradition in which the standards of humanity center around the white (male) subject.<sup>36</sup> Other scholars have shown that it is only the state that can really enforce and uphold human rights (and not all states want to do so)—not an international human rights regime—meaning, noncitizens always occupy a more vulnerable position within the confines of a nation-state that is not theirs.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, while being a member of society is affected by what it means to be a rights-bearing citizen of a territorial nation-state, what happens when being a citizen does not, in practice, improve the quality of your life? In the postcolonial state, meaningful citizenship is only the preserve of a limited elite, which means most “citizens,” find themselves “only tenuously, and even then ambiguously and contextually, rights-bearing citizens in the sense imagined by the constitution.”<sup>38</sup> In addition, in the Global South, unlike migrants in the Western liberal democratic state that may become formal members or residents,



the processes of claiming rights rarely results in formal membership.<sup>39</sup> Yet even within the Western liberal democratic state, as scholars of race, ethnicity, and class show, the distinction between the citizen and noncitizen is not a dichotomous one, but rests on a continuous and reversible gradation often connected with ethnoracial and ethnonational hierarchies.<sup>40</sup> For migrants who do become citizens, many experience social, cultural, and economic exclusion and remain situated on the “threshold between inside and outside”; they are included without being members and as a result are forced to “be the border.”<sup>41</sup>

A related body of scholarship on cities in the Global South examines how cities are important sites for new identities and alternative forms of citizenship.<sup>42</sup> For some, such as Mike Davis, the breakneck speed of “Third World” urbanization, reflected in the proliferation of “slums” in the Global South’s “megacities,” leads to an apocalyptic and dystopian existence.<sup>43</sup> Others, however, understand the city, including the megacity, as spaces of resistance and agency—even if the poor face severe constraints. Ananya Roy uses the concept of “subaltern urbanism” a “terrain of habitation, livelihood, self-organization and politics,” while cautioning against the romanticization of the urban poor—or what they call the *Slumdog Millionaire* effect (a reference to a 2008 film by British director Danny Boyle).<sup>44</sup> AbdouMaliq Simone says, “cities remain critical domains for engendering new collectivities” that “continuously remake the potentialities of life.”<sup>45</sup> Anthropologists John Holston and Arjun Appadurai’s work on cities and citizenship tell us, “with their concentrations of the nonlocal, the strange, the mixed, and the public,”<sup>46</sup> cities carry within them the conditions through which negotiations of membership play out. For while the modern nation state, including the postcolonial nation state, has sought to “dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and replace it with the national . . . cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship.”<sup>47</sup> Here, “place remains fundamental to the problems of membership in society.”<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile urban geographer Ayona Datta says informal neighborhoods create a “cosmopolitan neighborliness”—an openness to difference—in cities that are otherwise exclusionary to the poor.<sup>49</sup>

In many cities in Pakistan, Afghans have transformed space into place, imbuing it with emotional, social, and material investments. Using informal channels, such as social solidarity networks (friendships, marital relationships, relationships with neighbors), as well as middlemen and other power brokers, they claim rights and resources in the city. In this process, of struggle and redistribution, they experience an emotional attachment to the towns and cities of which they are a part. They become urban citizens, a status that

is informally recognized by the communities composed of citizens and non-citizens of which they are a part.

Afghan nationals are a part of global, transnational networks; mobility has emerged as a strategy to survive in the context of conflict.<sup>50</sup> A minority of these migrants have become formal Pakistani citizens through irregular channels. Political scientist Kamal Sadiq calls this the process of becoming “paper citizens,”<sup>51</sup> whereby, through bribery and forgery, refugees and undocumented migrants acquire official papers (identity documents, registration certificates, school enrollment forms, and the like).<sup>52</sup> But not everyone can do this—it is quite a skilled and expensive process or requires connections with officials or middlemen. Moreover, as I show in Chapter 5, new computerized surveillance technologies are making such strategies more difficult. Since the start of the WOT, Afghans in Pakistan have been governed by a framework of “repatriation” to Afghanistan—the assumption is that all Afghan nationals, irrespective of how long they have lived in Pakistan, will and should return to their “natural” territorial homeland.<sup>53</sup> However, many subjects of this book do not view the rural areas from which they or their parents came as home or their only home; rather, they want to remain in the towns and cities of which they are now a part.

Liberal ideas of the equality of all individuals in the eyes of the sovereign state are quite well understood and even idealized among ordinary people, including low-income groups. Meanwhile Afghans—even those with emotional ties to the Afghan nation—recognize the value of formal citizenship in Pakistan: of being equal to other citizens in the eyes of the law. But most of Pakistan’s longer-term Afghan populations know that formal citizenship is not accessible. Despite this, they still carve out their attachments, responsibilities, and sense of community in the localities and cities in which they live. For these Afghans, most of whom settle in urban areas, the city’s anonymizing form provides a sense of security. The nation is not so easy to attach itself to; it is exclusionary, jingoistic, and hostile. But the city is complex, layered, and made as much by the people who live within it, if not more so, than those who govern it at the municipal and national level. In the city, people from different class, ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds live side by side, not equally but in diversity. The city does, in important respects, accommodate different ethnicities, nationalities, sexualities, and classes within a single space—albeit subject to hierarchical, uneven divisions.

And yet, urban citizenship, as discussed in this book, and the claims-making processes upon which it is based are not to be conflated with the conscious, targeted, and *collective* action in urban spaces of advanced capitalist and liberal

democratic societies and has been discussed by the likes of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey.<sup>54</sup> Instead they are akin to what Asef Bayat calls “social non-movements” that draw on “atomized” acts, which are repeated simultaneously, but without coordination, which nonetheless create long-lasting changes (physical, social, cultural, ecological, economic, demographic).<sup>55</sup> These acts are a route to improving immediate circumstances, but they do not have the specific objective of enforcing political change. They are part of an “unplanned revolution.”<sup>56</sup> Though not intentional acts of resistance, they represent the “silent, protracted, but pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied, the powerful, or the public in order to survive and improve their lives.”<sup>57</sup>

For Bayat it is these spaces that we must understand as sites in which the potential for political change is strong, if and when the correct conditions emerge. My own research confirms the conditions for political change that would improve the conditions of Afghans in Pakistan are not present. Yet at the same time, for the people of this book, they have an agency, awareness, and lucid understanding of the structural conditions that govern their precarious lives. My research subjects know when they break the law, by squatting, siphoning electricity, and getting informal water supplies, these actions are taken out of necessity. Their moral claims to access basic goods and resources rest on constructions of the “*insaniyat*” (humanity) and “*insani haquq*” (human rights) of the poor—citizens and noncitizens alike. These understandings of *insaniyat* are somewhat reflective of Yasmin Saikia’s split nature of the human subject in South Asia, who is able to possess multiple identities. For Saikia, writing on the 1971 war in Bangladesh, the ability and need to have multiple identities is, in part, a reflection of the failure of a unitary national identity to successfully emerge in the region.<sup>58</sup> For the subjects of this book, their claims and calls of rights are not based on a regional construction of humanity, but one that is shaped by everyday lived struggles for rights, resources, and dignity that are often denied to them. It is their shared material conditions and lived experiences of deprivation that drive their actions, which lead to their attachments to the city.

### Reflections on Methodology

This book draws on fieldwork conducted over an eight-year period (2010–2018) consisting of ethnography, over five hundred semi-structured interviews, and archival analysis—details which are listed in the bibliography of this

book.<sup>59</sup> (Only interviews that were cited directly/used to inform case studies in the text have been listed.) The book is an effort to tell the story of ordinary peoples' lives situated between two global wars, the Soviet-Afghan war and the WOT. (It does not comment on the impact of the 2021 Taliban recapture of political power in Afghanistan.) As Afghans have been increasingly pushed out of Pakistan, this book is, in part, an act of witnessing and preservation. But it is also about uncovering how a new Afghan-Pakistani urban identity has developed over a period of forty years that is not so easy to undo.

I focus on Karachi and Peshawar since both cities are home to large numbers of Afghans and because they are marked by scores of "mixed" neighborhoods in which citizens, refugees, and undocumented migrants reside. Both cities, then, are relevant sites for a study on urbanity and local, national, and regional mobility. The two cities are different in size, demographics, history, economy, and politics. Karachi is a global port and megacity, home to some twenty-three million people. Situated on the coast and linked to the Indian Ocean world, Karachi is a vast, sprawling, metropolitan commercial center. Peshawar, on the other hand, is much smaller than Karachi, landlocked, home to some five million people, and a dry port that links the Central and South Asian regions. Both cities have, since Pakistan's creation, been important local, national, and regional migration hubs for Afghan nationals and Pakistani Pashtuns. Karachi, however, has been somewhat neglected in the Afghan story in Pakistan, with most attention centering on Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—including the areas formerly part of FATA. This book tries to move the Afghan story in Pakistan beyond the territorial "frontier."

Owing, however, to the mobile and networked lives of the people I worked with, I also conducted less intensive research in other cities in Pakistan (Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Jamrud, Swabi, Attock, Peshawar, Karachi); Germany (Berlin, Mainz, Frankfurt, Munich); France (Paris, Lyon); the UK (London); and Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara). I also reconnected with interviewees via messages and online calls to Afghanistan, Iran, Australia, Greece, and Italy.

In Karachi and Peshawar, my main field sites were informal housing areas or refugee camps located at spatial, infrastructural, economic, and political urban margins. In order to conduct my fieldwork, in some cases, I situated myself in a particular locality on a regular basis (Chapters 2 and 4), traveling daily to and from an area. At other times my fieldwork was dependent on movement across the city. The reasons for movement were multilayered. While dominant understandings of how to conduct ethnography require being based in one site

through processes of immersion, that is “of simply being there,” this often does not apply when it comes to studies of the poor, migrants or migration, and in contexts of political violence.

First, most of the people I interviewed were from low-income backgrounds (and in some cases have no income). They engaged in scavenging, daily wage labor, small enterprises, or handicraft work. Many walked and traveled long distances to access work, food, water, health care, and education. Some had their family split across different locations in the city (and, indeed, across Pakistan and in other countries) in order to secure a livelihood. In order to be able to interview them and understand their lives, I conducted some of my interviews with them in the areas where they lived and at other times I interviewed them at their places of work.

Second, I quickly came to see firsthand that many of my research subjects—Afghan refugees and undocumented migrants, Pakistani Pashtuns from the then FATA in Peshawar, and in Karachi, all Pashtuns, the Baloch, and the poor—were racialized. Their mobility in the city was accompanied by systematic harassment by law enforcement officers. As such, my sites of research had to include roads, checkpoints, and enumeration centers and techniques carried out by the state and UN-affiliated institutions.

Third, my own subject position and gendered social norms meant I felt, as a Pakistani woman, it would have been problematic for me to live in a participant’s house.

Fourth, I was acutely aware that housing a guest would have been burdensome for the host family in question.

Finally, the decision to remain mobile was also shaped by local political conflicts: the routine nature of bombings, political strikes (*hartal*), state surveillance in the context of the WOT, and the vulnerability of those who I worked with. A flexible, multisited approach to fieldwork was made inevitable by the difficulties of accessing field-sites. For example, in Peshawar and Karachi, when transport networks closed down because of a bomb blast or a political strike, some neighborhoods I had studied became difficult to access. Further, as a dual national, British and Pakistani, I was concerned that my status as a British national could put interviewees and interlocutors at risk, or that my Pakistani status would not protect others or me enough. The nature of the military-dominated state and WOT meant rumor and fear were (and are) a part of everyday life. The feeling of being under surveillance was never absent, though knowing which branch or faction of the state is doing what was impossible to decipher. On two occasions I was directly confronted by

intelligence officers; at other times I was told by family and colleagues that intelligence officers had asked details about who I was and what my work was about. This was, of course, an indication that the surveillance regime is working. What is at the heart of the panopticon is not necessarily being observed, but making the subject aware that she/he/they are being watched, which in turn affects the subject and shapes behaviors.

The climate of fear informed how I recorded my data, anonymizing names and even the locations in which I conducted my research. All of the names of individuals and specific localities have been substituted with pseudonyms in this manuscript.

During my research I was also concerned with how my subject position shaped how I produced knowledge, especially in the contexts of violence, migration, and poverty. I found myself reflecting on the methodological, political, and ethical considerations of documenting, analyzing (and pontificating over) instances and routine forms of direct and structural violence—from the bulldozing of houses, to malnutrition, deportation, to military operations, or criminal and political violence.<sup>60</sup>

As someone who identifies or is identified as a woman, Pakistani (Kashmiri-Punjabi), East African-Yemeni-Indian, Muslim, born and raised in the UK and sometimes Pakistan, I found some aspects of the worlds I was studying familiar. I lived in and visited urban Pakistan throughout my life—as a child, teenager, and adult. My mother's own low-income background, her recollections of living on handouts, going without food in Lahore and being malnourished as a result, and my grandmother's continued hand-to-mouth struggle are a part of my lifeworld. In interviews in informal housing areas in Karachi and *Andrun shehr* (the inner city) in Peshawar, the homes were familiar: the smells, the lack of a roof/broken roof, the wood fire or gas canister on the floor of the kitchen. Yet beyond this sense of familiarity with and, I dare say, nostalgia for my mother's poverty or the home we played in as children, I was disturbed by the commonplace encounters<sup>61</sup> I had with extreme poverty that were entirely alien and often shocking: severely malnourished infants, extreme illness, acute depression, death from poverty, and severe forms of persecution by the state were routine parts of my conversations and interactions. All of which could hardly be further from my relatively privileged existence stemming from citizenship from an affluent country and the ever-present option to leave unpleasant situations. At the same time, my fieldwork experiences are not simply encounters laced with unfamiliarity. Rather they are typical of so much of diaspora's experience and

of those whose upward social mobility has taken place within a generation: familiar, yet alien; learned, at times, lived, but only ever in punctuated bursts.

What is the responsibility of the researcher in this situation? The challenge, perhaps, is not to analyze these events as an encounter or as an aberration (which it was for me). Rather the consideration must be to allow the perspective of the individuals and groups in question to be considered and explained: to unpack how individuals and groups cope and contextualize their lives (and sometimes do not) in the face of massive and lethal structural shortcomings, and reclaim a humanity that is denied to them. One of the tasks of the anthropologist and social scientist is to humanize those otherwise marginalized and demonized, giving them a voice and bringing their life experiences to others. Yet crucially another task is to not just analyze how violence and suffering are enacted, experienced, narrated, and coped with, but to also analyze the historicity and the structural conditions, local, regional, and global that underpin their lives.<sup>62</sup> It is with this effort that this book has been written.

### Book Outline

Chapter 1 provides a historical background to the contemporary Afghan story in Pakistan. Drawing from archives and interviews, the chapter examines how Pakistan's Afghan question cannot be separated from the ways in which the British colonialism depicted and governed Afghanistan and British India's territories bordering Afghanistan through simplified prisms of Pashtun ethnolinguistic and tribal tropes—tropes that would eerily reappear in both the Soviet Afghan war and WOT. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 reconstruct microhistories of low-income urban neighborhoods on the outskirts of Karachi and Peshawar. The chapters focus on how neighborhoods—home to Afghans and Pakistanis—work together to secure basic resources and rights using informal channels. These acts, the book argues, reflect the calls of residents for rights in the city that they feel they are due to them. It is also through these actions that an urban identity that cuts across lines of ethnicity and nationality emerges. Chapter 5 examines how shifting geopolitics mean the Pakistani state tries to push back against the Afghan presence across the country by making repatriation central to its policy of managing Afghans. The book concludes by reflecting on what the harrowing reversal of the Afghan position in Pakistan teaches us about citizenship, refugee status, and geopolitics in an era of increased securitization.





# PART I



## Background



## CHAPTER 1

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# Ghosts of Empire: The Afghan Question in Pakistan

We find intact in them the manners and forms of thought picked up during their association with the colonialist bourgeoisie.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963

They [Pakistan] only speak of humanitarianism, but are themselves creating camps to train commandos against us.

—N. M. Taraki, former Afghan president, 20 March 1979

We remind the Government we haven't and will not recognize the Durand Line.

—Hamid Karzai, former Afghan president, 2017

The postcolonial state is not born anew. For Frantz Fanon the subordinated position of the postindependent state in the global economic system, the weakness of the national middle classes at the time of independence, and the psychological grip of colonialism combine to ensure the legacy of colonial rule lives on.<sup>1</sup> Building on the anti-colonial writings of Fanon, scholars of the colonality of power explain, “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” continue on long after the colonial period.<sup>2</sup> In particular, they draw attention to how ways of knowing and governing populations and territories stubbornly continue in the postcolonial state. As will

be seen in this chapter, the over-forty-year period of conflict in Afghanistan and interconnected migration processes covered by the period of this book (1970s–2010s) cannot be understood without accounting for the nearly two-centuries-old colonial governance practices along the Afghanistan–Pakistan and “Pashtun” border region. Drawing on archives, interviews, and secondary literature, this chapter provides historical background on the position of Afghans in Pakistan. It details how British colonial rule transformed understandings of space, ethnicity, and politics in what was the Afghanistan–British India (today’s Afghanistan–Pakistan) border region, constructing it as a shared “Afghan”/“Pashtun” space. During the Cold War, this border region remained a source of anxiety for the postcolonial Pakistani state. As a part of a strategy to exert influence in Afghanistan, Afghan refugees were welcomed in Pakistan. In more recent times, however, during the WOT, shifting political circumstances meant Afghans have no longer been welcome in the country as the Pakistani state attempts to articulate the difference between its Pashtun territories and peoples and those of Afghanistan.

### **The Makings of an Ungovernable Frontier: 1830s–1920s**

British colonialism transformed understandings of space and political power in the Indian subcontinent. But in contrast to other parts of the subcontinent where the Raj sought to territorialize its powers, in Afghanistan and the Pashtun border region, territorial ambiguity was a key part of governance practices.<sup>3</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century the British were expanding their political influence in the subcontinent toward the Punjab and Afghan kingdoms. By 1849 the former had been absorbed into colonial administration, but the latter remained outside its territorial control. A series of wars, the first in 1839–1842 and the second in 1878–1879, however, would lead to indirect British rule over Afghanistan. Since the British subsidized the Afghan state and played a major role in the selection of its *amirs* and kings, historians have referred to Afghanistan as a “rentier state” or a “crypto-colony.”<sup>4</sup>

Before colonial interventions in the region, the Afghan state had not existed as a well-defined territorial unit. In 1872, the British arbitrated the border between Persian and Afghan states in the Goldsmid Mission.<sup>5</sup> The British and Russians were also negotiating over the boundaries of the northern parts of the Afghan state.<sup>6</sup> By 1893, the British negotiated another

agreement with the Afghan monarch of the time, Abdur Rahman, to determine the borders of the Afghan state and British India.<sup>7</sup> The agreement, also known as the Durand Line agreement, named after the British negotiator Lord Mortimer Durand, brought a border of 1,510 miles into existence. To this day, the Durand Line has been contested by the Afghan state and has led to interstate tensions that affect the lives of ordinary Afghans and Pakistanis on both sides of the border.

The border between Afghanistan and British India, however, was not a clear-cut line dividing independent and sovereign states. Instead it was marked by a geographic space the British ruled indirectly—an approach to governance that had become widespread in the late nineteenth century in the subcontinent and Africa.<sup>8</sup> The populations residing in the geographic area under indirect rule—effectively a “special zone”—known as the tribal areas (today in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and until 2018, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas [FATA]),<sup>9</sup> were depicted by colonialists as being culturally different from the nearby plains that were home to “independent tribes.” As such they were to be governed by tribal “custom.”<sup>10</sup> Colonialists also viewed the tribal areas, with their mountainous terrain, as a natural geographic frontier to Afghanistan and the Russian imperial sphere.

In 1901, the plains next to the tribal areas (in British India) that were home to predominantly Pashtun populations, were grouped together by the colonial state and given provincial status.<sup>11</sup> Renamed as the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), today’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, until 1901, these areas had been a part of colonial Punjab, but now their inhabitants were made ethnically distinct from other inhabitants of the Punjab and tied more closely to the “Afghan”/“Pashtun” tribal areas and Afghanistan.

This “Pashtun” geography, consisting of Afghanistan, the tribal areas, and NWFP, was underpinned by notions of uniform, shared Pashtun tribal/ethnic identity derived from nineteenth-century orientalist, Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859), whose writings led to what Hopkins calls the “Elphinstonian episteme” guiding British governance in Afghanistan and the frontier that continues today.<sup>12</sup> It was Elphinstone who conflated the term “Afghaun” with Pashtun—a distortive assumption that has affected the history and political dynamics of multiethnic Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan today.<sup>13</sup>

The most important legal instrument used to govern this “Pashtun” region was the 1901 colonial Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR). On the one hand, the FCR was specific to the tribal areas—it remained in place there until March 2018.<sup>14</sup> The FCR in the tribal areas meant it was governed as a

geographic buffer zone, outside of the bounds of direct colonial rule. In the tribal areas, the FCR made tribal consultations in a *jirga* (council) the basis for criminal actions and dispute resolutions, not colonial courts. Tribal leaders, *maliks* and *khans*, were identified as intermediaries by the British and lucratively rewarded—a process overseen by the political agent of each agency. In the tribal areas, the FCR allowed for collective punishment of entire families or even tribes on mere suspicion of having committed unlawful acts; this included through arbitrary detention, economic blockades, destruction of property, and imprisonment of children. On the other hand, FCR could be applied to virtually any person of the Pashtun “class” (the term used in the FCR), and was regularly applied in the NWFP and Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the Pashtun body was racialized, potentially rendering the mobility of Pashtuns or Pashtun-looking persons within the wider British empire in India as vulnerable to extra layers of policing. The FCR also applied to the Baloch, who were constructed as racially different to the Pashtun, but nonetheless, still tribal and also primarily located along the frontier. (The colonial construction of Pashtun tribal society heavily borrowed from readings of Baloch society.<sup>16</sup>)

British colonial governance along the frontier and in Afghanistan constructed its inhabitants, Pashtuns, as prone to violence, a propensity both romanticized and condemned.<sup>17</sup> Elphinstone’s early nineteenth-century readings of an Afghan/Pashtun society and culture—prone to “revenge, envy, avarice, rapacity, and obstinacy,” but also “hospitable, brave, hardy, frugal, laborious, and prudent”—produced a set of tropes that are familiar even today.<sup>18</sup> They also marginalized the Persianate influence on Pashtun culture and rendered non-Pashtuns in Afghan territories to minor political players. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, a bleaker world of Social Darwinism, racism, and British military losses at the hands of Pashtuns, meant a more negative imagining of Pashtuns became common in colonial writings, justifying colonial violence against continued rebellions in the region—experimental aerial warfare, torture, and detention were a routine feature of British colonialism.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, double-edged colonial depictions of the Pashtuns—as heroic as they were savage—remained common and would reappear in Pakistan to support the mujahidin in the Soviet-Afghan war. More recently during the WOT the tropes have reverted to their negative form, with images of the fanatical, tribal Pashtun normalized in mainstream media discussions.<sup>20</sup>

### **Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Pashtun Question 1920s–1970s**

After a third Anglo-Afghan war in 1919–1923, Afghanistan negotiated full independence, acquiring control over its foreign policy from the British. The Afghan state embraced the idea that its subjects/citizens were native to the territories of Afghanistan, but often supported rebellions in the tribal areas against the British.

Meanwhile in neighboring British India, in the 1930s and 1940s, weakened by World War II and sustained anti-colonial resistance, Britain started to prepare for a gradual withdrawal from the subcontinent. In the tribal areas and NWFP, popular ideas of “Pashtunistan,” an autonomous political entity consisting of the tribal areas, NWFP, and parts of Balochistan, gained support. Its proponents were the Khudai Khidmatgar, a popular anti-colonial, nonviolent social protest movement, led by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan (Bacha Khan), and Mirza Ali Khan (the Fakir of Ipi), who led a violent anti-colonial movement in the tribal areas.<sup>21</sup> Yet at partition, the tribal areas and NWFP were absorbed into Pakistan; those who had called for Pashtunistan in the 1940s would now lobby for greater political rights for Pashtuns within Pakistan.

Pakistan’s post-1947 union—as a set of administrative and partitioned units (East Bengal, West Punjab, Balochistan, NWFP, Sindh, princely territories, and the Kashmir territories)—was tense. From an already fragile union of provinces and territories, the Pakistani political and military elite grew concerned that Pashtuns within the country would push for regional/ethnonational autonomy or separation and align themselves with Afghanistan to achieve this.

Yet Pashtun nationalists and progressives in NWFP were less separationist than the state rhetoric of the time claimed and were more concerned with democratic reform in postindependence Pakistan, where state power was concentrated in the military and bureaucratic administrations and geographically centered in urban Punjab and Sindh. In the 1950s and 1960s, numerous former members of the Khudai Khidmatgar joined the National Awami Party (NAP), a multiethnic, antiestablishment coalition led by Bengali socialist Mawlana Bhashani, which demanded democratic elections and social and economic redistribution across Pakistan.<sup>22</sup> Many Pashtun members of NAP were accused by the state of having links to Afghanistan, which adopted a policy of questioning the Durand Line and endorsing the political struggle of Pakistani Pashtuns.<sup>23</sup>

The Afghan state meanwhile engaged in a “postcolonial” nation-building project that centered a Pashtunized identity.<sup>24</sup> For the Afghan state, “Pashtunistan” was a way of sidelining the sizable number of Persian-speaking Tajiks, Turkmens, Hazaras, Baloch, and Uzbeks within the country.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, “Pashtunistan” was a useful way to pressurize Pakistan, who, after 1947, were inheritors of the British crown and had emerged as a geopolitical rival in the region. After 1947, interstate rivalry and frosty diplomatic relations and border skirmishes became the norm.

In 1947, the special envoy of the Afghan king, Zahir Shah (in power 1933–1973) to Karachi went to negotiate a treaty with the government of Pakistan, which included “an Afghan request to grant complete autonomy to NWFP and rename it Afghanistan or Pathanistan.”<sup>26</sup> In 1949, at the UN General Assembly, on the question of Pakistan’s admission to the UN, Afghanistan (eventually) supported Pakistan’s entry but also stated that Afghan policy was to “wholeheartedly” support the “principles on which the claim for an independent Pashtunistan is based.”<sup>27</sup> In 1955, the Afghan National Assembly repudiated all agreements with British India (now Pakistan) and rejected the 1955 inclusion of Pashtun areas in Pakistan’s “One Unit Scheme,” which got rid of Pakistan’s ethnofederal structures of governance.<sup>28</sup> Throughout much of the 1950s, pro-Pashtunistan propaganda was published and distributed by the Afghan Information Ministry and Afghan state.<sup>29</sup> Yet no direct conflict ever broke out between the two countries; additionally, Pakistan’s real geopolitical focus and source of insecurity was, inevitably, India.

In the 1970s, however, Afghanistan’s gradual move toward communism propelled it to the center stage of regional and indeed global Cold War politics. In 1973, Shah was overthrown in a coup d’état by his cousin and military leader, Dawud Khan (in power 1973–1978). The coup established a national parliament that pursued socialist-inspired state centralization. In 1978, the communist political party, the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), managed to unite its two rival factions, Khalq (the people) and Parcham (the flag), and, encouraged by the Soviets, launched another coup, the *Sawr* (April/Spring) Revolution. Khan and his family were shot dead and buried in a mass grave outside Kabul setting the tone of the PDPA’s time in power.<sup>30</sup> Its Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) pushed forward an even more radical program of state centralization, land reforms, and antireligious propaganda, which was underpinned by violence.<sup>31</sup>

Despite their Marxist ideals, the PDPA followed prior Afghan leaders by calling for a “Greater Pashtunistan.” Unlike previous leaders—whose calls for



Pashtunistan were largely rhetorical—by the late 1970s they were morphing into a concrete agenda, much to the dismay of Kabul's Soviet advisers.<sup>32</sup> By April 1978, half of the Central Committee of the PDPA were Pashtuns. By October 1978 this rose to three-quarters.<sup>33</sup>

As a counterbalance to the ideological and political threats posed by a left-wing Afghanistan, the Pakistani state supported political Islamists. In 1975, under Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (in power 1973–1978) of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Pakistani intelligence agency, the InterService Intelligence (ISI), supplied arms to rebels in Afghanistan's Panjashir valley who attempted to overthrow the Afghan state. By the mid-1970s, Pakistan was also inviting Afghan Islamists to Pakistan under the guise of refuge. In Peshawar I interviewed Haji Khaiyruddin, who had been a Kabul University student and an active member of the Jamiat-e-Islami on campus. He said he moved to Pakistan in 1975 because he was being “targeted by the [Afghan] government, along with the elite classes, the educated classes, the intelligentsia, and students,” for his political views, and because the government of Pakistan, specifically Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government, invited him and a “few thousand others” to stay in Peshawar, Pakistan.<sup>34</sup> Once men like Haji Khaiyruddin had settled into Peshawar, they became crucial links for the Pakistani establishment to support political dissent in Afghanistan.

Bhutto would be ousted from power and hanged in 1977 by Zia ul Haq's military dictatorship. Under Haq, a religious zealot, Pakistan's internal and external Islamicization program gained momentum. The Pakistani state's support of an Afghan resistance to communism was framed in explicitly “Islamic” terms. Defeating a left-wing, internationalist government in Afghanistan was both a means of undermining the growing power of the political left and ethnonationalist movements within Pakistan and a route to gain influence in Afghanistan (and thereby bolster its position vis-à-vis India)—a policy that came to be known, by the 1990s, as “strategic depth.”<sup>35</sup>

### Refugees and Cold War Politics

From the start of Dawud Khan's coup to the Soviet invasion, the violence of the Afghan state led to thousands and then millions leaving Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> Smaller numbers moved to India; a minority moved to Western Europe, North America, and Australia. By the mid-1970s, Pakistan was home to a few thousand Afghans. Most Afghans fled to neighboring Pakistan or Iran.

While the buffer zone of the tribal areas (after 1947, FATA), had always allowed movement across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, these movements were usually limited to nomads, those with family on both sides of the border, and some traders. From the mid-1970s onward, the numbers and scale of Afghan movement across the Durand line was unprecedented, with people moving from all parts of Afghanistan into Pakistan. The majority were ethnic Pashtuns from Afghanistan's eastern provinces, but there were also sizable numbers of Tajiks, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and Baloch. By the mid-1970s, Pakistan was home to a few thousand Afghans. In March 1978, Soviet intelligence forces estimated 35,000 Afghans were in Pakistan.<sup>37</sup> In December 1979, the Pakistani government and intelligence agencies placed 402,000 Afghans in Pakistan, which rose to 1.42 million by December 1980, 1.85 million by March 1981, and 2.08 million by May 1981.<sup>38</sup> The numbers continued to rise throughout the Soviet-Afghan war. By the end of the 1980s, some four to five million Afghan nationals were living in Pakistan. Over three million were in Iran and smaller numbers of Afghans were elsewhere.

Afghans migrating to Pakistan were given *prima facie* (on first encounter) refugee status—although this was never formally granted by way of a ministerial declaration and Pakistan.<sup>39</sup> The 1981 “Handbook on Refugee Management in Pakistan,” by Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), described Pakistan, although not a signatory, as conformed to the UN 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and was acting “in its spirit.”<sup>40</sup> The “Handbook” also defined a refugee, as “a person who is obliged to leave the state of which he is a national under the pressure of illegal acts or as a result of invasion of such state”—a nod to Soviet intervention.<sup>41</sup>

The refugee and humanitarian crisis that ensued was constructed as an issue that could be managed in Pakistan in the areas that bordered Afghanistan along the lines of a shared ethnicity, language, and cultural connections. Early Pakistani government documents show that people were encouraged to stay in the areas that bordered Afghanistan: the FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan.<sup>42</sup> However, Afghans were not legally confined to these areas and they did not live exclusively in refugee camps. Some lived in informal housing and rented private accommodation. Many Afghans moved to Sindh, largely Karachi, and Punjab—one official refugee camp was recorded in the Punjab and two others were recorded by the UNHCR in Sindh in the late 1980s (although, as I will discuss in the next chapter, the refugee camps in Sindh appear to have a precarious status).<sup>43</sup>

Soon after the Soviet invasion, Zia turned to the US and the Western bloc, the Gulf Arab states, and, to a degree, China.<sup>44</sup> In the 1980s, billions of dollars were pumped into Pakistan to offer humanitarian relief and covertly fund the mujahidin in what became a proxy war against communism. The Gulf Arab states were among the first to provide emergency relief and medical aid, building facilities that are still in use in Peshawar today. I met Nawar Saleh, an Afghan educationist, who worked with Gulf Arab and Western NGOs, mainly on the issue of immediate relief (foodstuffs, shelter) and primary education in refugee camps. He recalled: "There was so much money floating around. The [Gulf] Arabs gave so much. They distributed milk, dates, oil, biscuits, pens, pencils, sharpeners, and ink. They thought of every single little thing, which was given for free. If you saw Akora Khattak [in Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa] on Eid you would have been stunned. In Akora Khattak the milk used to come in a tanker, a tanker that was the size of an oil tanker. And do you know how much meat there was on Eid? They would come in droves to distribute the meat."<sup>45</sup> For other Arab states (Algeria, Egypt, and Jordan governing the West Bank of Palestine), the war was a chance to deport their own political Islamist dissidents, which included individuals such as Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri and Palestinian Abdallah Yusuf Azzam.<sup>46</sup> Osama bin Laden, founder of Al-Qaeda and son of a Yemeni billionaire, spent much of this period in Peshawar's University Town. Scores of ordinary Muslim citizens of Europe also moved to Quetta and Peshawar, to form a part of a Muslim international resistance that used a language of political Islam as a means of liberation from a global superpower. The occasional white European tourist also joined in the fray.<sup>47</sup>

Pakistan, the US, and its allies recognized seven Afghan Islamist parties based in Pakistan as making up the legitimate Afghan resistance in exile.<sup>48</sup> An eighth party, Hezb-e-Wahdat, comprising of Shia Afghans was based in Iran but received no Western support because Iran had been blacklisted following its 1979 revolution. The mujahidin in Pakistan were treated like heroes by the US and its allies. The British also returned to the FATA to provide Afghan fighters with military training.<sup>49</sup> Peshawar's University Town became home to international aid and intelligence offices—the headquarters of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operated out of Peshawar University's (now) Agriculture Department. US politicians and policy makers moved in and out of Pakistan with ease. In a 1981 Soviet Union intelligence report, Peshawar was described as the landing site of weapons and military instructors, who would then go onto the tribal areas, where the mujahidin were armed and trained.<sup>50</sup>

Pakistan tried to micromanage what mujahidin leaders leaked to the press; government guidelines forbade Afghan leaders to “hold any press conferences, issue any statements or meet national or foreign journalists without [governmental] permission.”<sup>51</sup> Refugee camps were also under constant surveillance.<sup>52</sup> The mujahidin, however, were allowed to have their own poverty alleviation programs, identity cards, schools and curriculums, and universities.<sup>53</sup>

To gather recruits and intelligence for cross-border military action, Pakistan and the US encouraged the mujahidin parties to operate inside refugee camps where massive numbers of Afghans were living. The US Department of State also believed that without international assistance to Pakistan, tensions would arise between Pakistanis and Afghan refugees, leading Pakistan to abandon its “stalwart opposition to the Soviet intervention.”<sup>54</sup> To avoid this, international humanitarian and refugee aid organizations were important resources; and donors, including from the US, had no qualms about imposing their political agenda on the NGOs they funded. Over 200 local and international NGOs supported the Afghan (and mujahidin) cause. The vast majority were in Pakistan, with 66 NGOs in Peshawar alone: the densest such concentration anywhere in the Third World.<sup>55</sup>

The UNHCR was an important institution in managing Afghans in Pakistan. Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees; nonetheless, it acted in support of the convention’s principles. In April 1979, the government of Pakistan appealed to UNHCR to help Afghan refugees seeking asylum there.<sup>56</sup> In May and August of 1979, UNHCR started its fact-finding missions in the country, and in August 1979, drew up a humanitarian assistance program. By December 1979, UNHCR had set up its first offices in Pakistan and signed a material assistance agreement program.<sup>57</sup> It would be followed by other organizations including the World Food Programme (WFP), which approved the provision of food aid on 31 December 1979.<sup>58</sup> However, UNHCR operated only intermittently in Kabul and had no office in Iran.<sup>59</sup> Both Afghanistan and Iran were constructed as being on the “wrong” side of Western-centric global politics.<sup>60</sup>

Pakistan had its own governmental agency for the management of Afghans, which coordinated and approved the activities of the UNHCR and other aid agencies.<sup>61</sup> Initially Afghans were managed by the Home Ministry and, during 1980–1981, the President’s Relief Fund managed funds for Afghans in Pakistan. This would then be handed over to the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR), which sat under the Ministry

of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), which also managed the FATA. CCAR had offices in all of Pakistan's four provinces—albeit with operations in Sindh being intermittent.<sup>62</sup>

While large amounts of aid were available to Afghans, it often did not best serve the interests of all refugees, many of whom had complex needs and desires that went beyond the refugee relief framework.<sup>63</sup> CCAR distributed direct assistance to heads of families, and included shelter and some building materials (tarpaulin for tents, roofing material), rations (wheat, edible oil, powdered semiskimmed milk, sugar, and tea<sup>64</sup>), water, bedding (quilts and blankets), clothing (including shoes—one pair per person, per year, and secondhand shoes), and cooking utensils. The government of Pakistan also provided refugees with a cash “maintenance allowance” of Rs. 50 per person per month with a ceiling of Rs. 500 per family, but, in practice, the government often could not provide this.<sup>65</sup> Indirect assistance included medical care, hygiene and sanitation, education, livestock and veterinary cover.<sup>66</sup> Afghans also had reserved seats at colleges and universities that continue to be in place today, albeit in reduced numbers.<sup>67</sup> In practice, however, international aid and government administrations could not keep up with the rising refugee population: staff, supplies, and funds were insufficient for the needs of refugees.<sup>68</sup> During the war, aid was usually channeled through male community leaders in the camps, disempowering women, who, along with children, made up 75 percent of the refugee population.<sup>69</sup>

In 1989, the final Soviet tanks withdrew from Afghanistan. The Geneva Accords laid the framework for Afghan repatriation from Pakistan. Toward the end of the war UNHCR Pakistan “Information Sheets” and “Fact Sheets” on Afghans in the country started to be more specific in the language around Afghans, calling them refugees who are “allowed temporary asylum” and are under “temporary protection.”<sup>70</sup> Afghans, however, did not leave Pakistan. Many of those who did quickly came back because of continued political violence in Afghanistan.<sup>71</sup> At the end of the war, while the PDPA remained in power in Kabul, descent into a bloody civil war was quick as different parties vied for power. The returning mujahidin persecuted former associates of the PDPA and feuded with each other; by 1992 the PDPA were ousted from power. The country descended into chaos, lawlessness, a spike in sexual violence against women; and a general feeling of insecurity in everyday life prevailed. In response the Afghan Taliban emerged from the province of Qandahar and Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan—they were supported by powerful sections of the Pakistani state.<sup>72</sup> Whilst the Taliban received initial support

in Afghanistan because of a promise to end lawlessness, their fundamentalist, puritanical reading of Sunni Islam only led to more violence. More Afghans moved to Pakistan and the Afghan population in Pakistan diversified in terms of ethnicity, class, and place of origin in Afghanistan. Cities like Quetta, Karachi, and Rawalpindi became hubs for Afghan Hazaras who built on preexisting religious and social networks to embed themselves in the country. Former urbanized members of the PDPA or those who had worked in the DRA's civil service also moved to Pakistan, settling in the country's major cities, especially Peshawar, Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. In Peshawar, I interviewed Nurjahan, a fifty-year-old Afghan woman who qualified as a dentist in Afghanistan under the PDPA in 1990. Her first job had been in a government surgery, as a result she and her family were threatened by returning mujahidin factions. She explained: "I was working as a qualified dentist. When the mujahidin returned, they targeted anyone who had worked in any government institution, even a dentist like me. We had to pick up all of our things and leave as soon as we could. It is too painful to remember how we left. I remember it all. I remember our car being shot at. When we tried to leave, I got separated from my sister and husband. . . . Her husband never made it alive."<sup>73</sup>

Following the end of the Cold War era, in the 1990s, Western-led international interest in Afghanistan and its refugee diaspora in Pakistan plummeted. The funding and scale of UNHCR and CCAR activities dwindled.<sup>74</sup> Despite continued conflict and displacement, the Cold War was over, and Afghans were no longer such a pressing geopolitical issue. In Pakistan, however, in the 1990s, Afghans remained welcome. In legal terms, the emphasis on a "temporary" status of Afghans in Pakistan gained strength, but, by and large, Afghans were not being asked to leave in a systematic way.<sup>75</sup> There were some efforts to encourage repatriation led mainly by the international refugee and humanitarian regime, but these were not strongly pursued and did not have the full support of the Pakistani state.

In an interview with the deputy commissioner for CCAR in Peshawar, I was told how, in the mid-1990s, some refugee camps were closed and World Food Programme (WFP) rations also reduced to encourage voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan, but that this decision was not driven by the government of Pakistan. "They [the international agencies] stopped the WFP in 1994–1995, which was a great set back. Someone at UNHCR had a "bright idea" and thought that what Afghans needed was to be independent and that by cutting off rations they would go back to Afghanistan. The same with closing down refugee camps and the reduced funding Afghan initiatives faced.

Of course, what happened in reality is that people left the camp and moved into settled areas.”<sup>76</sup>

### **The War on Terror (WOT)**

After 2001, the situation for Afghans in Pakistan changed. In October 2001, the US and its allies launched the WOT, invading Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban who were blamed for giving refuge to Al Qaeda, which was responsible for the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in New York and Washington, DC. The US president, Republican George W. Bush (served 2000–2008), demanded the Taliban “hand over leaders of the Al-Qaeda network” and, since they would not at the time, he told the world, “The Taliban will pay a price.”<sup>77</sup> Having occupied Afghanistan, the US and its allies advanced a program of neoliberal “state- and peace-building” based on free market economics, electoral democracy, and encouraging private property—a model applied elsewhere, from Iraq, to Sri Lanka, to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>78</sup> For the US and its allies, the repatriation of Afghan refugees from neighboring Pakistan was a helpful public relations tool to give the impression that peace had been achieved and that the war was a success.

Afghan refugee repatriation was also an important issue for Afghanistan’s post-2001 ruling elite. During the early years of the WOT, the Afghan leader handpicked and approved by Afghan elites and the US-led coalition and later democratically elected by Afghans, Hamid Karzai (president 2002–2014), put forward the idea that Afghanistan’s massive transnational diaspora should return to their national homeland and participate in the state- and peace-building processes. Though he was dependent on the economic and political support of the US, Karzai sought to stop Pakistan’s influence in Afghanistan through the Taliban. He pushed to make sure that international aid for Afghans was routed through Kabul, not Islamabad, which had been the center for international aid for Afghans from the 1970s. He also ensured that Afghans in Pakistan participated in the 2005 Afghan national elections. Ashraf Ghani, the next elected president (2014 to August 2021), did not enable the participation of Afghans in Pakistan in elections, but he did follow a similar repatriation agenda to Karzai, introducing new, centralized policies that linked refugee repatriation to all aspects of governance.<sup>79</sup>

Pakistan, for its part, joined the US-led WOT in 2001 under General Pervez Musharraf, according to whom, the US said it would “bomb them

[Pakistan] back to the stone age” if it did not support the war.<sup>80</sup> The country’s ports and roads ensured NATO supplies reached Afghanistan. Like the US, Pakistan conveniently sidestepped its historical support—and glorification—of the mujahidin and their version of political Islam and obfuscated its ongoing relationship with the Afghan Taliban.

The war in Afghanistan, however, led to the Afghan Taliban and other militants seeking refuge in the FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan and the rise of Taliban factions within Pakistan, such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP). Mass human rights violations by the military and, in response, even more militant activities were witnessed across the country.<sup>81</sup> Some 66,000 people are reported to have been killed in the war—in Afghanistan the number is 157,000.<sup>82</sup>

In the WOT, as the conflict was fought in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, colonial-era tropes of inherent Pashtun fanaticism and violence informed and justified US and Pakistani military interventions in these regions.<sup>83</sup> Elphinstone’s nineteenth-century musings appeared to resurface, untouched, in the twenty-first century. However, unlike the Soviet-Afghan war, where a “fuzzy” Pashtun border region—the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the FATA, and parts of Balochistan—had been a strategic asset that allowed quick movements of the mujahidin into Afghanistan, this was not the case in the WOT. In fact, for a number of reasons, Pakistan wanted to better control movements across the border. First, improved control along the border was important to US military goals in Afghanistan—namely it could prevent the Afghan Taliban from seeking refuge in FATA. Wikileaks cables from 2009 reveal that in a series of meetings at the US embassy in Islamabad with then president Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yusuf Gilani and Interior Minister Rehman Malik, the US Department of Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano offered to work with Pakistan to improve its border security with Afghanistan.<sup>84</sup> Second, the WOT’s spread into “mainland” Pakistan, with the Pakistani Taliban carrying out bombings and attacks beyond the usual border regions, hitting Lahore, Karachi, and other towns and cities, meant violence was suddenly not confined to Pashtun spaces and peoples—people who, historically, the state had constructed as being accustomed to violence. Third, and linked to the previous point, Afghans have been scapegoated for the rise in violence in the WOT, creating momentum in establishment for repatriation.<sup>85</sup> Fourth, given that Afghan (Pashtun) political elites continued to deny the validity of the Durand line, a historical sore point for the Pakistani state, exercising better control over its borders suited the Pakistani establishment.



As a body of scholarship on sovereignty and borders discusses, borders are not just “there” as premade lines on a map, rather borders (and thereby sovereignty) get made through acts<sup>86</sup> of “border performativity.”<sup>87</sup> For Pakistan, border performativity for greater political control has taken on a number of forms. This includes the March 2018 integration of the FATA as full districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the ending of the draconian colonial FCR law.<sup>88</sup> It has also been witnessed in the border skirmishes between Pakistani and Afghan armies<sup>89</sup> or the construction of a wired border fence between Afghanistan and Pakistan (starting in 2013 and only ebbing nearer to completion by 2021).<sup>90</sup> Yet for the subjects of this book, the most crucial part of this border performativity has been how Pakistan engaged in a concerted effort to repatriate or deport Afghans to Afghanistan. Afghan repatriation has emerged as the centerpiece of Pakistan’s refugee policy—a point I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 5.

To help with the policy of repatriation, the Pakistani state has gone into even more detail about the legal status of Afghans in the country. By 2004, Afghans who moved to Pakistan were no longer considered refugees, but economic/undocumented migrants.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile Afghan refugees were now referred to as “Afghan citizens” in Pakistan.<sup>92</sup> The limits of Pakistani hospitality had been set: no new “waves” of migrants would be accepted in the country.

Encouraging Afghans in Pakistan to return to Afghanistan suited Afghanistan’s earlier-mentioned policy of reclaiming its citizens. Repatriation also complemented wider regional and global trends. In the Global North antimigrant xenophobia has dominated the political mainstream and deportation is increasingly an accepted form of state policy. In the so-called European refugee crisis of 2015, behind Syrians, Afghans were the largest asylum-seeking national group in Europe. They found themselves caught in cycles of deportation and remigration.<sup>93</sup> Various embassies and consulates in Kabul, Karachi, and Islamabad produced posters, social media hashtags, and information campaigns to deter migrants—for example, Germany ran the “#RumoursAboutGermany” campaign (English, Pashto, Dari) and Australia ran the “No Way! You Will Not Make Australia Your Home” campaign (English, Urdu, Pashto, Dari).<sup>94</sup> Suddenly, the border appears in the middle of the city, staring down at those passing by from a raised billboard. Meanwhile in Iran, Afghans have a long, complex history of economic, social, political, legal, and cultural marginalization and enforced deportations. In the 2010s, disenfranchised Afghans were also reported to have been given a choice: either fight on the frontlines of the post-Arab Spring war in Syria, on the side of Bashar al-Assad,

or face deportation.<sup>95</sup> And in 2019 India said it would not give citizenship to Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Bangladesh. Finally, in Pakistan, as this book shows, Afghans—once the largest home to Afghans outside of Afghanistan—are increasingly being forced out of the country.

By around 2005, some seven to eight million Afghans were estimated to have been living in Pakistan.<sup>96</sup> Between 2002 and 2018 a massive 4,374,208 Afghans left Afghanistan for Pakistan—although some are assumed to have migrated, again, out from Afghanistan and others are suspected to have returned to Pakistan.<sup>97</sup> Yet there are still some 2.5 to 3 million Afghans living in the country and claiming the towns and cities in which they live as their own. Most of these Afghans were born in the country and are the children of Afghan nationals who migrated to Pakistan in the late 1970s or early 1980s; over 90 percent of Afghan households originate with individuals who moved to the country in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and some 74 percent of Afghans were born in Pakistan.<sup>98</sup> These Afghans then are in a process of negotiating their belonging in Pakistan. The ghosts of empire continue to haunt their lives, yet despite this, many have pushed and are pushing to create another world, at least in the localities and cities in which they live. It is to their stories I will now turn.

# PART II

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## Claiming Rights



## CHAPTER 2

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### The Right to Water in an Informal Refugee Camp

He counts water as so precious, that  
His pots and pans are contaminated with dirty water.  
He makes no distinction between clean and unclean water,  
Even if his water is mixed with urine.

—Rahman Baba, 1650–1715

The pains of labour drove her to the trunk of a palm tree.  
She cried: Alas, I wish I had been dead and forgotten long  
before all this!

—Quran, Surah Maryam, 19: 23

The death of Summaiya was on everyone's mind. Tens of thousands of people, mostly Afghan nationals and some Pakistanis, live in Camp-e-Marwarid in Karachi—the exact number is not known—but information spreads quickly here. In the days and weeks after Summaiya died from complications in childbirth, feelings of frustration, anger, and resignation dominated conversation: death, particularly during childbirth, had become a normal, yet painful, occurrence of daily life in the area.

When Summaiya went into labor, her contractions were punctuated by abnormal bleeding; her female relatives knew she needed to get to a hospital, fast. In the camp, women normally give birth at home with the help of women in the family. There are no traditional midwives or emergency medical services in the area. There is a medical clinic, sponsored by a German church-based nongovernmental organization (NGO), but it is only open twice a week,

between 09:00 and 13:00, and deals mainly with referrals. There is a private hospital a fifteen-minute car drive away, but most residents cannot afford the medical fees. The nearest affordable government hospital is a forty- to forty-five-minute drive away, but no one has a car in Camp-e-Marwarid and it costs some 800 rupees (US\$5.00) to get there in a private taxi—most people earned 200 rupees (US\$1.50) a day and could not pay this. There is no public transport.

Summaiya's home, situated in a cluster of Afghan Uzbek dwellings within the settlement was a ten-minute walk away from a main road. Panicked, a relative of hers had called a friend, a Pakistani Baloch taxi driver who lives in a nearby neighborhood; he agreed to take her to the government hospital. He said he would meet them at the main road. As she was unable to walk from the pain, two younger boys from her family, both under the age of twelve, borrowed a wheelbarrow from a neighbor and put Summaiya in it, "*janwar ke tarah*" (like an animal), they said. They would have struggled to push her on the unpaved and broken smaller roads inside the camp in the dark of night. But they managed. By the time they reached the edge of the camp where the taxi was waiting, they hoped they had done enough. But Summaiya never made it to the hospital. She and her unborn child died in the back of the taxi. Yaqub Gul, a relative of Summaiya's, went to collect her body. A man in his thirties, with four children of his own, grief permeated his voice as he recalled opening the door of the taxi upon its return in the early morning, "filled with blood, all over the floor at the seats." He went on, clasping his hands, "We have no hospital near to us. The nearest Government hospital is miles away. It was too far."<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan, alongside Afghanistan, has one of the world's worst maternal and neonatal mortality rates.<sup>2</sup> Mothers and newborn babies from poorer backgrounds or regions are at particular risk. In Camp-e-Marwarid, polio, cholera, waterborne illnesses, skin diseases (scabies), psychological disorders, and malnutrition are common across the population. Many women are malnourished during pregnancy and childbirth, which has significant implications for both mother and child after birth.<sup>3</sup>

For women who were pregnant in Camp-e-Marwarid, prayers, I was told, were their only hope. In the week after Summaiya's death, I was visiting Gulshin,<sup>4</sup> a twenty-four-year-old woman, in her parental home. Gulshin's father, Habibullah,<sup>5</sup> was also one of my key interlocutors and I would meet her when she was visiting her parents with her husband. The house was made of a light brown mud and not concrete, locally referred to as a *katcha* (mud/unfinished) house. There was a waterline in the house, constructed in the 1980s by the Karachi Sewage and Water Board (KSWB)—the public company responsible

for supplying water and treating sewage for the entire twenty-three million people of Karachi—but no water was coming through the pipes in the whole area. There were no gas lines in the area. The self-made drains surrounding the house often got flooded with rainwater.

Sitting in the courtyard, reflecting on Summaiya's death, Gulshin told me she was worried for her mother, who, in her early forties, was also pregnant and in her final trimester. She explained, "Women often die here in childbirth, because there is no health care and no water. How can you give birth without water?" Gesturing to her mother she said, "All we can do is pray for her. Pray for my mother that she is able to give birth and that she survives." This was a common refrain among women in the camp. Faith plays a role in providing psychological and emotional support to Gulshin and her mother, but there is no belief that "the cause of misfortunes and of poverty are from to God"<sup>6</sup>—something Frantz Fanon had said applied to the colonized prior to their political awakening. For Gulshin and others, such as Yaqub Gul, faith is an important coping mechanism, but they blame the inequalities that govern their lives on the shortcomings of local government and NGO officials. They understood that the denial of basic material conditions underpinned their suffering. "They [the NGO, the government] leave us here to die, without *anything*," Gulshin said. (Emphasis in original.)

Using interviews and ethnography, this chapter reconstructs the making of Camp-e-Marwarid in the 1980s. It uncovers how the settlement was purposely positioned in the outskirts of the city as a way of spatially and socially excluding Afghans from Karachi "proper." It then explains how, since 2000, the settlement started to diversify as small numbers of Pakistanis began settling in the area. Next, it examines how residents of the area—predominantly Afghan nationals—navigate the lack of water supply through local neighborhood community-based mobilization. The chapter shows that as residents push for rights and resources, they engage in processes of place-making in the city. Before I get to that, however, I will provide a brief history of the settlement, together with some context on its unusual legal status, which has important implications for its inhabitants.

### **An Informal Refugee Camp? Camp-e-Marwarid**

I conducted ethnographic research in Camp-e-Marwarid (not its real name) in the form of semistructured interviews with current and former residents.

This was accompanied by informal discussions, visits to homes, and daily interactions in the area. I also completed interviews with government officials, NGO workers, and UNHCR field staff in and outside of the area. During my time in the area, I assisted the lone teacher of a primary school at the camp. I also occasionally helped with Urdu and Pashto translations between patients for the Pakistani and German doctors at the medical clinic. Because I was “located” in the school and clinic, local residents, especially women, but also men and children, were able to become familiar with me. Several chose to share their experiences with me in these “quasi-public” spaces. Others, curious as to who I was, invited me to their homes early in the morning, where interviews took place over tea in a less formal setting.<sup>7</sup>

During this period, I lived with my *khala* (maternal aunt) in an apartment in Clifton, an affluent neighborhood on the southern tip of Karachi by the sea. It took one-and-a-half hours (each way), to reach Camp-e-Marwarid by a mix of rickshaw, buses, or carpooling with people who worked for the NGO or near the settlement. Karachi is known as *roshanion ka shehr* (the city of lights), and one feels this expression of urbanity in Clifton. The same cannot be said of Camp-e-Marwarid. Situated on the extreme outskirts of Karachi’s metropolitan boundaries, the area is often eerily quiet, with hardly any car owners and a small number of motorcycles, and bicycles. Most lack conveyances and rely on local “Datsun”/four-wheel truck taxis or yellow taxis to reach work, health-care facilities, and to go shopping for goods not available at the local *bazar*. The homes in the settlement are one-story in contrast to other parts of the city, where vertical expansion is the norm. The way homes are built indicates differences in wealth. Higher-income households of, say, traders, have *pakka* (concrete/finished) homes or with one or two *pakka* walls, with the rest of the walls being *katcha*. Most families, however, live in *katcha* houses. The poorest families live in tent structures. Yet rich or poor neighborhoods are not segregated. Rather most housing is arranged along kin and clan lines and, in some cases, replicates ancestral Afghan village networks.

Camp-e-Marwarid exists in a strange legal and administrative position: according to CCAR and UNHCR officials, it is an “informal” refugee camp, the only one of its kind in Pakistan.<sup>8</sup> I tried to unpack what exactly is meant by this informal status by understanding which government body is in charge of/owns the land. But this seemingly basic point was not easy to decipher. Karachi has thirteen different land-controlling and management authorities<sup>9</sup> and I consistently received ambiguous responses from different government departments as to which department owned/was in charge of managing the area. In different



interviews, elders of the area (*mashar* (sg.)/*mashrano* (pl.)), and officials working at CCAR Sindh told me the land was given on a sublease to Afghans by the Government of Sindh.<sup>10</sup> This, the Sindh provincial officer for CCAR told me, had been facilitated by their office.<sup>11</sup> But I was also told that no formal legal agreement exists as to the area's establishment and trying to find a paper trail was close to impossible. Even the head of CCAR in Islamabad was unclear about the status of Camp-e-Marwarid. In an interview in 2015 he said:

There is no refugee camp in Karachi and Sindh. It is more of an urban settlement in a Pashtun-dominated area. It is not an Afghan area. . . . To be honest, nobody really knows the status of the land. It is on private land, as far as I know. Private arrangements have been made to manage the land. No one has said anything [made a legal declaration] to the government of Sindh. There is no land dispute there. Either way, whatever the arrangement is, whoever has made the arrangement and whose land it is more than happy to lease the land on an individual basis.<sup>12</sup>

Refugee camps are designed to be temporary and nonpermanent, but Camp-e-Marwarid faces an additional problem: it is not actually a refugee camp.<sup>13</sup> In Pakistan refugee camps are built either on government or private land that has been leased to the provincial CCAR department (private landholders are compensated with a small fee by the government for the use of their land), and the UNHCR manages, coordinates, and funds relief and protection efforts.<sup>14</sup> But unlike other parts of Pakistan, in Karachi the CCAR's and UNHCR's presence has always been sporadic. Officially, CCAR's Sindh office opened in 2003 and UNHCR's Karachi suboffice was mainly concerned with repatriation programs, for which it set up the Afghan Refugee Repatriation Cell (ARRC).<sup>15</sup> Camp-e-Marwarid is not listed as an official refugee camp by CCAR or UNHCR, meaning the area does not have the moral and political protection of international humanitarianism nor Pakistan's own refugee governance framework.<sup>16</sup> Camp-e-Marwarid's unclear and unusual status also means it cannot be incorporated into any Pakistani incremental housing upgrade schemes that are led by state or civil society actors in informal housing areas—these have a significant historical precedence in the city and are supported by the 1987 Sindh Katchi Abadi Act<sup>17</sup> and 2001 National Housing Policy.<sup>18</sup>

It was this ambiguous status of the area and its placement on the extreme outskirts of the city that pushed me to ask how this area had come into being.

Why was the area in such an odd legal limbo? And what were the implications for people's everyday lives?

### **Camp-e-Marwarid's Place in the Modern Makings of Karachi**

Karachi is not an ancient city. Built on a coastal plain and facing the Arabian Sea, it used to be a small fishing village. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rulers from current-day Balochistan and Sindh started to use the area and its natural harbor in more strategic ways. By the 1830s, the city gained importance as a strategic and trading port under British colonialism. But it was the formation of Pakistan in 1947 that forever changed—and indeed made—Karachi as huge numbers of Muslim refugees from the newly created Indian state moved to the city. Between 1941 and 1961, the city's population increased by 389 percent, “possibly the fastest rate of growth ever registered for a city of that size in world history.”<sup>19</sup> After 1947, demographically, Karachi became a *muhajir* dominant city—*muhajir* (refugee) being the name given to the Muslim migrants from India.<sup>20</sup>

After 1947, as Karachi also became—and would remain—Pakistan's economic hub, it also started attracting migrants from Afghanistan. In the 1960s the city Afghans moved to Karachi in search of work and set up homes alongside Pakistani migrants of different ethnicities (Sindhi, Seraiki, Pashtun, Swat, Hazara, or Punjabi speakers) who were also moving to the city in search of work and settling on vacant land close to the industrial areas. I interviewed Hamza, a thirty-two-year-old Afghan Pashtun who lived in one of these informal housing areas and whose parents moved from Qandahar in the 1960s. Hamza, a second-generation Afghan, explained how he had an emotional attachment to his ancestral village, his neighborhood in Karachi, and the city and its people—his neighbors and friends. Like most Afghans who moved in the 1960s, his family became Pakistani citizens by informally securing Pakistani national identity cards, yet it was to the city that Hamza felt an expressed attachment. He said:

Both of my parents came to Karachi from Qandahar [Afghanistan] when they were quite young, in the 1960s. . . . 1962 or 1963. Families from our village in Afghanistan moved together and settled in Karachi and others came later. For me and my siblings, we know

we are Afghans and Pashtun and that our families are from Qandahar. . . . But we are from this city. We grew up here, it is what we know. In our neighborhood you have Afghans, [Pakistani] Pashtuns, Punjabis. . . . We are different, we still marry within our family and kin, but we live together [with Pakistanis]. We play football together, we fix the roads of our area together. Our parents had their *shana-khti* [Pakistani national identity] cards made. We are not Pakistani. We are from Qandahar, we are Afghan. . . . But we are from and of Karachi [*hum Karachi ke hain*].<sup>21</sup>

By the late 1970s the political violence in Afghanistan meant greater numbers of Afghan nationals moved to the city. These movements accelerated in the 1980s. The exact number of Afghans living in Karachi was never clear because neither the UNHCR nor CCAR was ever consistently active in the city. Afghans also settled across various neighborhoods in the city.<sup>22</sup> It is also suspected that sizable numbers of Afghans secured Pakistani national identity documents and were absorbed in government censuses as (Pakistani) Pashtuns.

In 1980, the UNHCR said 20,000 Afghans were in Karachi.<sup>23</sup> As the 1980s progressed, other sources placed the figure at anything from 500,000 to 1,000,000.<sup>24</sup> CCAR data lists one refugee camp in Karachi in 1986 (Deh Tasir [15-12-1986]) and another in 1987 (Bijar Buti [15-2-1987]), but these were temporary and not officially a part of CCAR and the UNHCR's relief efforts.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, Karachi, in the 1980s, was witnessing the ascent of the Muttahida Quami Party (MQM) (initially the Muhajir Quami Party) in urban Sindh. The MQM, an urban political party, founded in 1984, that claimed to represent the political interests of muhajirs in Karachi and Hyderabad. In Karachi, and within the MQM, powerful colonially inherited epistemologies conflated Afghans—even those who were not Pashtuns—as being the same as Pakistani Pashtuns. Tropes of “Afghan”/“Pashtun” violence were common and intensifying because of the Soviet-Afghan war. The war in Afghanistan and Karachi's position as a port city increased drugs and arms in the city and country. Newspapers ran stories claiming drugs and guns were concentrated in Pakistani Pashtun or Afghan networks. This was not untrue, but neither was it entirely accurate. First, it appears that the drugs and arms trade was primarily located in a few prominent Pakistani Pashtun networks that intersected with non-Pashtun networks, including Punjabis, Baloch, Muhajirs, Afghan nationals, and others.<sup>26</sup> Second, it also depended on the complicity of

official actors.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, tropes of the Afghan/Pashtun were contributing to growing tensions between muhajirs and Pashtuns in the city.

A series of well-known and violent confrontations between muhajir and Pashtuns appear to have indirectly played an important part in the creation of Camp-e-Marwarid. This included the 1985 death of Bushra Zaidi, a young female student from the township of Nazimabad and from a muhajir family.<sup>28</sup> Zaidi was killed by a speeding bus. It is alleged the bus was driven by a Pashtun man. Later evidence suggests the man driving the bus was from Pakistan Administered Kashmir or was a Punjabi.<sup>29</sup> However, the idea of a Pashtun driver fitted into the idea of the “wild”/“tribal” Pashtun. These discursive practices underpinned wider tensions about the monopoly that Pashtuns held on Karachi’s transport networks and underlying muhajir concerns about being marginalized in Karachi and Hyderabad—cities the MQM were increasingly claiming as their “native” spaces in Pakistan. As tensions flared up, law-enforcement agencies completed a number of operations in Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun settlements that displaced the populations in them: an operation in the township of Sohrab Goth is said to have been responsible for Afghans being relocated to Camp-e-Marwarid.

Sohrab Goth is a township that sits on the outskirts of Karachi. It is some twenty-five kilometers from the traditional city center (toward the south and closer to the port). During colonial rule, Sohrab Goth was a place in which migrants from today’s Afghanistan and Pakistan’s northwest and western border regions settled. In more recent years it has been home to the main bus terminal for routes to the rest of Pakistan and the gateway to the city by road, today called the Super Highway (a part of the Pakistan National Highway), which connects Karachi to Sindh and the rest of Pakistan.

In the 1980s, similar to today, the area was a mix of regulated apartment blocks and informal housing structures. It was also known for its Bara Market, where cheap fabrics were available to the city’s upper middle and middle classes. You could also find imported and smuggled goods and arms in the market—all of which are still available in pockets of the market today, as I found out when I was conducting interviews there. It became one of the sites of violent confrontations between Pashtuns and MQM workers and sympathizers—the latter of whom would target the area because of its reputation as a “Pashtun” space.<sup>30</sup> In response to both Pashtun-Muhajir tensions and claims of a booming drug trade, several security operations took place in the area by the police and Rangers—the latter a paramilitary wing of the state. One of the most well-known operations was “Operation Clean Up,”<sup>31</sup> enacted in

December 1986. The operation shut down Bara Market, dismantled Afghan and Pakistani Pashtun settlements, and evicted Afghans from Sohrab Goth, moving them to Camp-e-Marwarid.

Throughout interviews with current residents of Camp-e-Marwarid and current/former residents of Sohrab Goth who were present in the area in 1986, I was told that the conflict with the MQM and the claims of an economy of drugs and arms in Sohrab Goth led to the evictions of residents and demolition of key parts of the area. Residents who had lived in the area from the start would often say in passing, “*Unho ne hamein zabardasti nikal diya*” (They evicted us by force), “*Humare ailaka ko tor diya*” (They broke our area apart), “*Wo humein is jangal me le aye*” (They [the government] brought us to this jungle/unsettled land). Rostam, an Afghan Pashtun fabric wholesaler who lived in Sohrab Goth at the time said, “Junejo [Pakistani Prime Minister under martial law 1985–1988] did it—the breaking down of the area. A notice came that the [Super] Highway’s Bara Market was quite bad, of ill repute. So, they, the government, officials, and police broke it down.”<sup>32</sup> Another resident, Haji Hayat, an Afghan Uzbek who moved to Camp-e-Marwarid in the mid-1980s said, “They emptied [*khali kar diya*] people out from Sohrab Goth and moved them here [Camp-e-Marwarid]. We had to build these houses ourselves, paying for the materials we needed to local [construction] dealers.”<sup>33</sup> While another, Maulana Abdul Qais, an Afghan Tajik who had lived in Camp-e-Marwarid from its establishment said:

We came here [Camp-e-Marwarid] in 1986 when people were thrown out of Sohrab Goth. The mosque that we are sitting in was one of the first to be built. People used to live down in Sohrab Goth, but then in 1984–1985 the situation started to change. Things got bad in the city. Eventually people were made to leave. All Afghans were shifted from Sohrab Goth to Camp-e-Marwarid, which is when we came here. They said Al-Asif is full of heroin . . . that’s what they used to say. They said it was full of heroin and drugs and that people had to move out of there. Afghans, we were blamed for this all. This place was just a *jangal* [unsettled land] and we were moved here.<sup>34</sup>

For Maulana Abdul Qais and others, they felt Afghans were blamed for a rise of drugs and criminality in the city. Others added how they were dragged into the emerging tensions between the MQM and Pakistani Pashtuns and suspect that this is why they were moved. One said, “Our name [i.e., Afghans]

was bad even though it was a not our [Afghan] issue but a Pakistani one. It was the Pakistanis [Pashtuns] who were having problems with the muhajirs, but we, Afghans, were blamed for things.”<sup>35</sup> Later reports support this claim and indicate that those involved in the drugs and arms trade received a tip-off before Operation Clean Up was conducted and were able to escape relatively unscathed; it was ordinary residents, Afghan and Pakistani, who suffered the consequences.<sup>36</sup>

I was unable to pinpoint an exact date for the genesis of Camp-e-Marwarid, to work out who set the land aside for its residents or to ascertain whether the operation on Sohrab Goth had a direct role in relocating people to Camp-e-Marwarid. It is likely that gradual movement, coercively encouraged by state actors, took place as the conflicts in Karachi intensified, culminating with the Sohrab Goth evictions in late 1986. That year was frequently cited as the year of formation, and one interviewee specifically stated “June 17, 1986,” even though “Operation Clean Up” took place later in 1986.<sup>37</sup> Some individuals report police vans escorting residents to the new area with their belongings and helping them settle in. Others say they had to arrange their own transport, cobbling together whatever possessions they could, and moving in taxis, vans, and, in some cases, on foot.

Crucially, after the raids in Sohrab Goth, a settlement emerges in Camp-e-Marwarid that was exclusively for Afghans. The Provincial Commissioner for CCAR Sindh specified in an interview, “It [Camp-e-Marwarid] was only for Afghans in the 1980s. The others, the Pakistanis came later, but this land has been set aside for Afghans.”<sup>38</sup> This was confirmed by residents of the area who also explained that Pakistani residents moved to other areas or rebuilt their homes in Sohrab Goth. Relocating the most vulnerable residents of Sohrab Goth to Camp-e-Marwarid was a quick and cheap way for local authorities to say the growing ethnic tensions in the city were being dealt with. It also served to separate Afghans from Pakistani Pashtuns, evidence of an early, purposeful attempt to spatially separate noncitizen refugees from citizens and enact a form of social exclusion.<sup>39</sup> Camp-e-Marwarid was created to deal with a population that disturbs what anthropologist Liisa Malkki calls the “national order of things”<sup>40</sup> to prevent what Simon Turner calls, the “contamination of the nation and its citizens by outsiders, it is important for refugee camps to establish and maintain this distinction between the inside and the outside.”<sup>41</sup>

If Sohrab Goth is on the periphery of Karachi, and some 25 kilometers away from the city center, Camp-e-Marwarid is on the periphery of this periphery: it is some 21 kilometers away from Sohrab Goth. Even today,

smaller peripheral centers, such as the new Sabzi Mandi (vegetable market), are 12.3 kilometers away from the city center. In 1986, infrastructure and access to utilities and resources in the area were minimal. It was only because Camp-e-Marwarid was near the Super Highway that it indirectly benefited from infrastructural developments in surrounding areas. Maulana Abdul Qais said, “There was nothing when we came here. . . . This place had no population and no people. Imagine, this entire place was totally quiet. A *jungal* [wild area]. . . . There was nothing. No houses. No structure. Nothing. For about a year they [WFP/UNHCR] gave us rations. The government distributed [ration] cards. There was some water provided as well . . . not always but it was there at first. . . . But this place was nothing.”<sup>42</sup>

The government accepted some responsibility toward the residents of Camp-e-Marwarid, as populations within the territorial jurisdiction of the state. The land in Camp-e-Marwarid was subsidized by the government—although as mentioned, understanding which government body owns the land has proven to be difficult. Initially, the government of Pakistan gave the land, the WFP gave residents rations, and UNICEF provided a primary school, vaccines, and supported construction of some waterlines. Yet the food rations lasted only for approximately one year; and the support for waterlines was intermittent. By and large, projects to improve basic health and infrastructure have been sporadic or nonexistent.

### **Making Space for Pakistanis in Camp-e-Marwarid**

Significantly, the state’s efforts to separate Afghans from Pakistanis were not entirely successful. Afghans had already been living in different parts of the city—even aside from Sohrab Goth—and could not be contained to one area. In Sohrab Goth, Afghans who had enough money and connections to move to other parts of the city or rebuild their homes did so, often alongside Pakistani Pashtun citizens. In an interview with Rostam, mentioned earlier, he explained how he moved with his family from Baghlan to Karachi in the early 1980s. The family had small landholdings in Afghanistan and came to the city with enough money and contacts to invest in a small fabric business in Sohrab Goth’s Bara Market. In 1986, when the homes and shops were damaged in Sohrab Goth, Rostam simply rebuilt his house. Wary of the greater vulnerability of being an Afghan national, he also secured Pakistani national documents through informal channels. He explained, “We had enough money

and contacts with Pakistanis, so we stayed. We still live in Sohrab Goth. . . . We were able to rebuild our homes and since then many of us have made our homes bigger. People do not say anything to us, we have money, we are a big family. . . . We eventually managed to have our identity cards made as well, so now we are Pakistani too.”<sup>43</sup>

After the initial settlement of Afghans, Camp-e-Marwarid continued to develop and change with the city of Karachi. In the 1990s as violence in Afghanistan continued, more Afghans moved to the city, usually crossing into the Chaman border in Balochistan. From 2001, the neoliberal peace-building agenda in Afghanistan meant Afghans moving to Pakistan were no longer considered refugees, but economic migrants. In Camp-e-Marwarid, a number of Afghans affected by war in Afghanistan continued to seek refuge—many were the poorest residents of the settlement.

From around 2000, the migration of Pakistani citizens to Karachi also increased in pace because of poorly managed ecological disasters,<sup>44</sup> such as the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and 2010 floods, as well as Pakistan’s military campaigns in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the then FATA. A 2012 a report on Karachi stated that three hundred thousand Pashtuns moved to the city after the military operations in FATA began<sup>45</sup>—yet reliable data on this remains unavailable.

From around 2004 to 2005 Pakistanis started to move to Camp-e-Marwarid. This included people affected by the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and later Baloch persons displaced by military conflicts, though they gradually relocated to other neighborhoods. Displaced persons from Pakistan’s WOT military campaigns in Bajaur, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Swat, also gradually moved to the area and remained present throughout my fieldwork. The Pakistani arrivals worked alongside other residents to get access to resources, but were viewed with caution by Afghan residents.

Spogmai, a twenty-seven-year-old Pakistani Pashtun woman and her older sister Samira from South Waziristan moved to Karachi in 2006 with their husbands and children because of conflict in their area.<sup>46</sup> Initially they lived in an apartment in Al-Asif square, but decided to move to Camp-e-Marwarid because the rents were cheaper. I would meet Spogmai in the medical clinic where she worked as a volunteer to get free powered baby milk formula and water for her baby daughter. At other times, I would see her with Samira fixing the walls and other parts of their home. Spogmai explained that her decision to move to this predominantly Afghan neighborhood was based on economic and material considerations. She said:



We moved from our village to Karachi when the war started to get bad. We already had family in the city who told us where we could live. But Al-Asif [in Sohrab Goth] was too expensive and busy. We could not afford the rent. What my husband made [as a taxi driver] in a day would not cover much. Then we decided to move out here; the rents are cheaper, there is more space too. . . . We built the house ourselves, buying the materials from a local supplier. We live alongside Afghans. There are problems though. The water is bad. I never have enough to feed my [baby] daughter. This is why I work in the [NGO medical] clinic, to feed the baby some milk.

Muzammil, a teenager from Swat, moved to Camp-e-Marwarid with his family in late 2009 following the Pakistan military's campaigns to defeat the Tehrik-e-Taliban. He explained, "When the fighting started, we made our way to Karachi. My father knew people from our village here [in Karachi]. First, we stayed in Sohrab Goth, in a *katcha* house there. But then people said we should move here because it is cheaper and quieter. So, my father brought us here, and we moved into one of the houses that used to belong to another family . . . an Afghan family."<sup>47</sup> Yaqub Gul (Summaiya's relative from earlier in the chapter), expressed concern that Afghans, as nonnationals, might be forced to leave the area to make way for Pakistani citizens.<sup>48</sup> Pakistani and Afghan residents are aware of the difference between each other as nationals and nonnationals. Yaqub Gul said:

We do not know how long we can stay here. We have been here for many years. Recently however, Pakistanis have started moving into the area. In the neighboring area there are lots of Pakistanis, and they say that this land is Pakistan's and Afghans should move. First it was Kashmiris, then the Baloch, and now Pashtuns. We managed to stay, but how long for? We do not know what we can do. We do not own the land. . . . It is not clear who does. Anytime we lobby the NGO to improve our water supplies they dismiss us. They tell us that they must redirect the funds to other more urgent initiatives in other localities. What does this mean? That we don't need water? How much more urgent could our situation be? We literally have no water.<sup>49</sup>

During my fieldwork, individuals and families defined themselves as Afghan and of the following ethnicities: Pashtun, Tajik, Turkmen, Mughal, and Uzbek,

or as Pakistani Pashtuns from Waziristan and Bajaur, both former agencies in the FATA, and Swat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Yet, the number of people living in Camp-e-Marwarid, Afghan and Pakistani, was unclear; no comprehensive survey of the area that is inclusive of all the people who live within it has been conducted. An unpublished 2005 field report by a UNHCR employee placed the Afghan population in the area at over 100,000.<sup>50</sup> A few years later in 2011, a larger survey by the UNHCR and government of Pakistan, counted some 25,000 registered Afghans in Camp-e-Marwarid, that is Afghans who had Proof of Registration (POR) cards issued by the government of Pakistan in collaboration with the UNHCR; but nonregistered Afghans (also referred to as undocumented migrants) were not included.<sup>51</sup> During my fieldwork (between 2010 and 2016), residents in the area cited figures starting at 30,000 people (citizens and noncitizens).

What seems clear is that the area is predominantly home to Afghans with land that was earmarked for them by state actors—albeit without any legal protection. Yaqub Gul, however, was worried that the area's predominantly Afghan population would lose access to resources to Pakistanis, especially as more Pakistanis were also moving to the neighboring settlement. This anxiety, in the first place, reflected Karachi's rapid urbanization, which has placed a strain on the city's infrastructure and resources and has led to different identities being constructed and seen as in competition with each other.<sup>52</sup> Second, they reflected the growing momentum toward Afghan repatriation programs, which were making Afghan residents feel less secure in their homes. And yet despite Yaqub Gul's anxieties, residents of the area (citizens and noncitizens) worked together to try to resolve the area's water crisis, which was affecting them all: needs dictated cooperation.

### The Problem of Water

Throughout my work in Camp-e-Marwarid many of my interactions, interviews, and work in the school and medical clinic were related to water-related illnesses and deaths. Water, "*Pani*" [Urdu], "*Uba*" [Pashto], "*Ab*" [Dari], were words that dominated my conversations with residents of the settlement, where residents struggled to drink, cook, clean, complete ablutions, wash clothes, and run sanitation systems. Summaiya's death was, in part, residents explained, made worse because she had poor access to safe drinking water. In her pregnancy she was often dehydrated and unable to maintain basic

hygiene standards. When Gulshin earlier said, “how can you give birth without water,” she was referring to a basic need to enable a safe birth and delivery for cleaning and postnatal care. Afghan and Pakistani residents alike were clear that water was a basic human right—*insani haqq*—that all residents of the camp, citizens or not, should be afforded.

Water was once provided to the area through direct waterlines, initially in each individual home, funded partly by UNHCR or UNICEF. However, the water supply slowed in the mid-1990s and, sometime between 2001 and 2004, it eventually stopped. By 2010 residents had managed to get an alternative water supply through Karachi’s water tankers. By 2015, the waterlines were working again, fixed, apparently by the KSWB. However, the lines stopped working in the same year, so the reliance on water tankers remained.

Across Pakistan, access to safe drinking water is a pressing issue. It is expected that Pakistan will become a water-scarce country by 2035, if not before.<sup>53</sup> Some “40 to 55 million Pakistanis—about a quarter to a third of the country’s total population—do not have access to safe drinking water.”<sup>54</sup> Karachi’s problems with water management are particularly pronounced. The city’s water demand (680 million gallons per day, or MGD) is well in excess of the supply (547 MGD).<sup>55</sup>

Karachi has two main sources of water: the Indus, Hub (both river sources), and other smaller, well sources.<sup>56</sup> Experts outline several ongoing and impending problems with these water sources, including the failings of the KSWB.<sup>57</sup> While the KSWB is meant to generate Rs. 16 billion (US\$200,000,000) annually, it only recovers Rs. 2 billion—12.5 percent of the amount billed. The result is “a huge financial burden, and KSWB is unable to pay its electricity bills or keep the system in better repair.”<sup>58</sup> This often creates delays and issues with water distribution and sewage treatment.

Water scarcity is also affected by other historical global, national, and metropolitan factors. These include global climate change, in which Pakistan is one of the highest “at risk countries.”<sup>59</sup> Pakistan’s position in the world economy also places high demands on its agricultural and industrial production, which use up most of Pakistan’s water—the agricultural sector uses up to 90 percent of Pakistan’s freshwater supplies.<sup>60</sup> Further, the interstate rivalry between India and Pakistan includes a battle over water resources, which is tensely managed by the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.<sup>61</sup> Finally, within Pakistan, poor coordination between government departments (for example, between the agriculture sector and urban planners) also means that water supplies do not reach the populations that need them.<sup>62</sup>

Karachites have a number of options to deal with water mismanagement. Rich and upper-middle-income households buy bottled water to drink from multinational companies such as Nestle, but most people cannot afford to do the same (many bottled water outlets also reportedly sell contaminated water).<sup>63</sup> The areas in which they live also receive tapped water supplies through waterlines.<sup>64</sup> Waterlines are also present in a number of low-income informal housing areas thanks to incremental housing upgrade schemes.<sup>65</sup> In such cases, water is either provided to individual homes directly or to community hand pumps where residents must manually fill containers with water.<sup>66</sup>

Water is also delivered and sold via commercial water tankers (vehicles with a water tank attached to them) to be stored in large under-tank systems, also known as *awami* (people's) tanks; these are usually found in low-income informal housing areas that have no access to piped water.<sup>67</sup> The Karachi Water Tanker's Association (KWTa) says it has between 6,000 and 7,000 tankers on its registers, although there are other tankers in operation, working in alliance with local state and political actors.<sup>68</sup> In fact, the supply of water through tankers is a hugely lucrative enterprise in the city—it is estimated that 42 percent of water is supplied through what is referred to as the “water mafia.”<sup>69</sup>

Water from the KWTa or other suppliers is delivered to the under-tank, which is made of a nonrust metal. Officially, these tanks should be constructed by the city administration or the Rangers (a paramilitary force), but are often constructed by residents of areas themselves.<sup>70</sup>

To fill up their tankers, owners of the commercial water tankers buy water from one of the KSWB's nine official hydrants in the city—all nine of which are managed by the Rangers.<sup>71</sup> The price of the water is meant to be fixed, but in practice the rate is often doubled. The water is then transported in these commercial water tankers to a residential area, poured into under-tanks, from which residents fill up their individual household water in cartons (usually sized at one to five liters) for a fee. But a preliminary 2009 survey of six towns in Karachi (Orangi, Site, Gulshan, North Karachi, Landhi, and Gaddap) showed instead of the designated nine KSWB hydrants, there were 161 unofficial hydrants/filling points and many other water access/siphoning points across the city.<sup>72</sup> The 2009 survey was completed by researcher and activist Parveen Rahman who worked alongside the Orangi Pilot Project a network of urban planners and community activists who have pushed to improve and legalize informal areas and infrastructure in the city. Rahman and others showed that illegal hydrants are sold and installed with the help of KSWB officials, after which the water is sold by the commercial tankers

to residents at high rates—often twelve times what regular customers pay.<sup>73</sup> Billions of rupees are made in the water sector in Karachi;<sup>74</sup> for laying those realities bare, Rahman, however, paid the ultimate price. In 2013 she was murdered, it is suspected, by members of the water mafia in the city.<sup>75</sup>

### “It’s Our Home”: Community Mobilization

During my fieldwork in the area, residents urgently wanted to resolve the water issue: the only way to do so was to use informal channels. Two different solutions were reached. The first was in 2010–2011 when agreements were reached between the Rangers and residents and another agreement was made with a commercial water tanker supplier. The second was in 2015, when residents were able to get waterlines reactivated by the KSWB—although these waterlines have been stopped and started many times since then.

During my first phase of fieldwork in the area (2010–2011), residents first asked government officials, the UNHCR, and local NGOs to donate the money needed to fix and renew the waterlines. But in a series of meetings, the provincial CCAR officer directly told the residents, and me, “We do not have the funds and the money to renew the waterlines [for the camp].”<sup>76</sup> The church-based organization was reluctant to financially invest in projects in case Camp-e-Marwarid was closed down. This was in tune with shifts in geopolitics in the WOT, which meant across the country Pakistan was concerned with Afghan refugee repatriation initiatives rather than refugee integration or relief projects. The head of accounts at the NGO told me, “We cannot put the money we raise into building long term solutions here. We do not know how long this area will be here and how long Afghans will be allowed to stay, so we divert the funds to other areas.”<sup>77</sup>

Residents were acutely aware of and frustrated by bureaucratic frames the NGO used to justify its decisions of nonfunding. Maulana Abdul Qais was working with residents to try to regenerate water supplies in the area, including by lobbying the NGO that was active there. He explained:

The costs [for renewing the waterlines] were coming to Rs. 29 lakh and Rs. 30 lakhs but they [the NGO] would not authorize this. They said that we have been here for a while, but they do not know how much longer we will be here for and that money would go to waste! Behind all the talk of *insaniyat* [humanity] is a profit-based

approach. In 2010 money was raised privately for the NGO specifically for Camp-e-Marwarid's water needs, but they gave it to Pakistani areas after the 2010 national floods. . . . Anything that is Afghan, it is taken away [i.e., the dried-up waterlines]. [In 2010] our things [piped water] were given to a "higher priority" area and went to Pakistanis. But we too are high priority—how many people need to die here for us to be a high priority area?

Yaqub Gul felt frustrated that the area's position in the city, shaped as it was by an Afghan identity and state initiatives to encourage Afghans to leave the city, was leaving residents vulnerable to lack of basic rights and resources. They also questioned the humanitarianism employed by the NGO and its implications for the lives of the residents. In a number of ways, the church-based NGO in question was providing relief and is a much-needed presence in the area—for example, by feeding malnourished children, testing for diseases, and providing shelter and clothes to severely poor/ill persons. However, residents felt the NGO failed to meet their expectations. Yaqub Gul said:

These NGOs make promises that they cannot keep. . . . All of the people that work here, are they sincere? Do they really care about us? One doctor that comes to the hospital, he comes when he wishes and says that he is working to help us! But he does nothing. He comes once a month, if that, and when he comes, he goes home early. Sits for a couple of hours and that's it. Two weeks ago, you were there [gestures to me] you were there when I asked him to come and see that child [his nephew] with the skin problems. That doctor, he just comes and sits there. Do you think he cares? He doesn't do anything. He never did see that child. He died this week. . . . If they say they will help, then help. But we don't want to hear your false words. Keep words and keep them yourself. We will help ourselves, God willing.<sup>78</sup>

As suggested by the language of Maulana Abdul Qais and Yaqub Gul, camp residents did not silently accept the marginal positions they were put in. Instead, they tried to get access to water (among other things) and circumvent the challenges they face by using social networks, local patrons, and tapping into the informal water supply chain of Karachi. They used local community mobilization to secure a basic resource (water); this, they were clear, should rightfully be "theirs."

In order to get access to water, family members, friends, and strangers (Tajik, Uzbek, Pashtun, Mughal, and Turkmen and Pakistani Pashtuns) worked together. In the settlement, as is the case in much of South Asian society, the family, that is immediate and extended networks of kin and clan, is the most important unit that orders people's lives and community life. But in the case of accessing water for the area, the family and clan unit was transcended. Residents reached out to Pakistani friends—primarily Pashtuns and Baloch—in the neighboring townships who were better connected to local government officials and other power holders. Yaqub Gul's childhood friend, Hamid, a Pakistani Pashtun from Balochistan who lived in Sohrab Goth, tried to lobby his contacts to supply materials to fix the waterlines. Habibullah's Pakistani Pashtun business partners in the nearby town also came to assess what could be done. Meanwhile Spogmai's husband (from Waziristan) also used his connections to extended family members in the city to see if anyone could help.

A symbolic and shared struggle for water brings unrelated actors, who are otherwise strangers, together. Common expressions used in the interviews when describing why people were trying to get access to water and other basic material resources included: "It is hard for *us*," "*We* find it difficult," "*Our* people struggle here," "*We* work together," "*Our* area," (emphasis added to all) to indicate a common attachment to Camp-e-Marwarid as a place that is a site of a localized humanity. This was based on a lived experience of people within a neighborhood space who see each other suffering daily. As the two young boys pushed Summaiya along in a wheelbarrow, her pain and path to death was seen and heard by many who knew her as well as those who did not. Her story circulated for weeks in the area. It is still remembered—as are the stories of others. Residents also regularly attend funerals of those who have died of illnesses from water shortages. The collective grief at such gatherings forged a sense of common cause and unity, motivating them to work together to try and stop water-borne illnesses from spreading in the area.

As water access continued to deteriorate, residents met to discuss possible routes of action, pooling resources and connections with formal actors and organizations. Guest rooms, homes, mosques, and the alleyway were sites of public discussion.<sup>79</sup> Women were a central part of the dialogue and their labor was crucial for community organizing. They would enumerate how many members were in each household, detail how much water they needed, cook the food and tea as "public" meetings took place. Residents stayed up late at night together to find some way of accessing suitable water supplies.

During this time, Yaqub Gul oversaw the production of the estimates of the costs of new waterlines. He would often have the estimates with him, written in his notebook. He also printed them out on A4 plain paper in Urdu and English, paying for the prints in a print shop in Sohrab Goth. He kept the paper in his notebook and, if he met anyone from an NGO, a local government official, or a potential philanthropist (which he read me as at one of our initial meetings), he would take out a copy and offer it to the individual in question, hoping to encourage them to support their endeavor. Other residents and elders, such as Maulana Abdul Qais, his sons, and the women of his family completed queries and surveys regarding the number of people in different sections of the camp, which helped Yaqub Gul produce his estimates. Habibullah approached his contacts from the NGO to ask if they would support the waterlines scheme (they did not). Still others approached various contacts in government departments as well as organizations they were familiar with, including an informal truckers' organization in Sohrab Goth, to see if anyone had any leads as to who could get the area water access.

Yet the 2010–2011 (and then later 2015) success, residents told me, was only really made possible when Haji Mahfuz got involved. Haji Mahfuz is an Afghan Uzbek in his late forties; his family was among the first to settle in the area. His father had fought with the Islamists in the Soviet-Afghan war and, as a result, he had strong vertical and horizontal networks in the city with Afghans, Pakistanis, and government officials. His relatively good education, at a religious seminary, and his connections to local traders positioned him as an individual with social, cultural, and economic capital. He drove a Honda Hero 100 cc motorcycle and would often be seen driving in and out of the area in the morning as he headed out to work or to meet his contacts in Sohrab Goth. We would frequently run into each other in the area. Once, we met at the clinic. I was there completing observations when Haji Mahfuz spotted me. One of his daughters had fallen ill in Camp-e-Marwarid from drinking unclean water, so he had come to the clinic to get advice from the doctor. He may have been better off compared to others in the area, yet he still suffered from the same lack of access to clean water.

In 2010–2011, Haji Mahfuz had a contact who put him in touch with the Rangers. Acting as a spokesperson for the area, he secured an informal agreement with some officers in the Rangers. The Rangers agreed to allow a commercial tanker into the area that would take water from one of the nine official hydrants of the city and deliver it on a regular basis—this could then be stored in under-tanks in the area. The under-tanks were built under some



of the bigger mosques in the area and in some shops in the *bazar*. Each tank “owner” took responsibility for maintaining the tank and the water. During my observations, water was sold to residents in blue five-liter plastic cartons for five or six rupees. Residents would then carry their cartons back to their homes and refill them as and when needed.

I was not able to ascertain the full details of the terms of agreement and the connections between Haji Mahfuz, the Pakistani Rangers, and commercial tankers. Conversations always stopped short of the full terms being revealed. It is likely, as some residents speculated, that Haji Mahfuz benefited in some way. However, residents welcomed the agreement. I was told, “The Rangers were good to us. They were the ones who arranged it so that we can have some water.” Gradually, as I spent more time in the area, another informal contract was secured, but this time with private owners of commercial tankers (the “water mafia”). The settlement ended up with two main water suppliers, which led to variations in the price of water. (Water regulated by the Rangers was cheaper.) The informal agreement offered an important lifeline for residents who said, “We are relieved . . . at least there is something now.”



Figure 1. Residents filling a five-liter water carton from the *bazar* in Camp-e-Marwarid.

### Resilience or Reinforcing the Status Quo?

Government officials lauded Camp-e-Marwarid's local community for doing an "excellent job" at securing water and navigating the politics of the city to do so. The provincial head of CCAR in Sindh referred to Haji Mahfuz as "the good one" and said, "He [Haji Mahfuz] did a lot of the running around and chasing after people . . . he should be given credit where it is due. He did a lot. He is the one that resolved the entire issue of water. He's a good organizer."

An employee of the UNHCR said, "They [the residents] really worked together to pull this off," praising them with tropes of their durability. Another remarked on the Afghan/"the poor's" resilience, "They [Afghans] are a tough people. They are creative. Look what they achieved here, through hard work."

The UNHCR employee and CCAR official praise the resilience of residents of the settlement, a quality increasingly identified as desirable among communities and nations by international institutions and government bodies. Yet, as Yarimar Bonilla asks, "We certainly want our buildings and bridges to be resilient, but do we really want our communities to become well-adapted to structural (and infrastructural) violence?"<sup>80</sup> "Resilience," as Bonilla points out, is but another form of neoliberal governmentality where "self-care" obscures the historical factors that make people vulnerable in the first place. Instead, everyone is assumed to be on a level playing field and can, if they try hard enough, improve their lives. But the solution that residents of Camp-e-Marwarid manage to negotiate are not effective, and most certainly not for its most vulnerable members.

Residents in Camp-e-Marwarid frequently complained that the water in the area was not safe and unclean. "Look at the color!"; "It tastes sweet!"; "This is not safe." It is estimated that 30,000 Karachites (of whom 20,000 are children) die each year from unsafe water and residents in the area frequently complained that they did not believe the water was safe to drink. As Noman Ahmed's study *Water Supply in Karachi* shows, people only rely on under-tanks (Rangers) as a last resort and are often preoccupied with the cleanliness of water—as well as reliability of water delivery.<sup>81</sup>

Another problem with under-tanks is that they are part of a process that it is labor intensive. Traveling to and from home to the under-tanks to fill up five-liter cartons of water every day, multiple times per day, takes time and requires manual labor. For those who are ill, less bodily able, and elderly, this is a difficult task, which becomes even more difficult in intense heat, cold weather, and rain. In one of the poorer households of the area, an elderly husband and wife,

Idris and Gul Bibi, struggled to get the water they needed. For a few weeks, Idris was bedridden, struck with fever and unable to walk. His condition deteriorated so that Gul Bibi could not walk to the *bazar* to fill up the water. He was reliant on a neighbor, Zulekha, who sent her children to check on the couple, after which Zulekha would try to send them water when she could.

Finally, many residents cannot afford to buy multiple five-liter cartons of water daily, each at a cost of five to six rupees. They simply do not earn enough. For these people, they then turn to another alternative to the already alternative informal water supply: the small depression of standing water in the camp, also referred to as “the dirty water.” As Haji Mahfuz was waiting to get advice on treatment for his daughter in the medical clinic, he recalled the deaths of four children as a result of this dirty water. He said, “The water here is not safe and clean at all. Where we are living four children died because they were washing and playing in the dirty water. You might wonder, what type of parents would let their children bathe in dirty water? But what choice did they have?”

Later, in 2015, when I revisited the area for follow-up interviews, I was told that the community organizing had continued apace, this time with success: the waterlines were turned back on. Residents showed me with relief as they turned on a tap in their courtyards. Again, Haji Mahfuz appeared to have been an important influencer; apparently it was he who had connections to the KSWB. But the solution would not last. The waterlines are said to have worked only intermittently, sometimes totally shutting off, leaving residents to continue to rely on the poor-quality water tankers and the small water depression.

In addition, while residents of Camp-e-Marwarid are constructed as “resilient” by officials, the actions of all those who drove the initiative were never purely altruistic, and solutions were subject to relations of power profiteering and even exploitation. The task of getting a water contract for the camp was achieved through lobbying vertical networks of a government institution, actors, and local power holders, not the will of the people. In the first instance in 2011, the Rangers were the essential link to getting access to the commercial water tankers and then, in 2015, it appears to have been the KSWB. Moreover, in the area, more powerful residents or elders exploited weaker residents to advance their own power and make money. Some elders have established relationships with officials and used these to secure gains for themselves and their interest groups. This was a charge that was leveled against various elders, including Haji Mahfuz, by some residents in the camp.

It is worth making an important digression here to explain the position of elders in Camp-e-Marwarid. In Camp-e-Marwarid, the position of elder

(*mashar*)/representative (*namainda*) is usually held by a senior male figure in a given area or within a kin or clan group. It is not a formally institutionalized relationship. In many cases, elders are selected as mediators to resolve internal issues within their area or kin network using a consultative system. But the external intervention of state institutions, local NGOs, and the international humanitarian and refugee aid regime also affected who was recognized as an elder/representative. Institutions such as CCAR, the church-based NGO, law enforcement agencies, and academic researchers, needed a way to communicate with residents in the locality. Often, the easiest route to do so was to choose an interlocutor—such as elders/representatives—who can communicate effectively with these outside actors. These acts of recognition are not neutral and reinforce the positions of internally recognized elders or create new elders/representatives. In some cases, I also found some NGOs working within Camp-e-Marwarid talking about female Afghan “elders,” even though Afghans themselves never did this.<sup>82</sup>

During the Soviet-Afghan war, the need for mediators was especially great in refugee camps in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In Karachi, this was less so, given that there was less humanitarian aid and no direct recruitment for the war based in the city. However, in the context of the WOT and Afghan repatriation and registration programs, government and UNHCR initiatives created a need for mediators. In post-2001 CCAR in Sindh instituted a Council of the Afghan Muhajirin that is headed by one Afghan representative—an individual that is chosen by various Afghan elders across the city and approved (informally) by CCAR Sindh. Government departments and other institutions that work with Afghans in the city have a list, usually customized according to their own interactions, of male and female elders, their locations, their telephone numbers, and other notes. The elder acts as a mediator with state actors and institutions, including CCAR, UNCHR, and other organizations, particularly on issues of repatriation, registration, and security (although this process has been prone to break down). Although the elders are not remunerated for their role, this external recognition by the state, international actors, and NGOs enhances their cultural and political capital.

A number of the elders in Camp-e-Marwarid who moved out of Camp-e-Marwarid are much wealthier and powerful than those who still live in the area. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the land of Camp-e-Marwarid is meant to be free. However, residents explained that elders who lived outside the area were renting out land and properties in the area. In some cases, residents were evicted from their homes for not paying rent on time. Maulana

Abdul Qais tried to use his authority as a local elder to stop the evictions and high rents, but was unsuccessful. He said, “People pay Rs. 500, Rs. 600, and Rs. 700 here. They usually pay to the elders who used to live in the camp and have now moved out of the area. This one elder is just concerned about making money and he is the one who keeps evicting people and bringing others in.”<sup>83</sup>

Maulana Abdul Qais was talking about Haji Jamshed, who used to live in Camp-e-Marwarid, but moved to a house Sohrab Goth. He had made money from trade networks in the Gulf Arab states and was rumored to own property in Karachi and Dubai, although when I asked him directly he denied it was the case. As well as renting out land and property, he was also the person who had secured access to electricity in the area via an informal contract with the Karachi Electricity Supply Company and charging residents high and unfixed rates for electricity.

Government officials and the UNHCR frequently consulted Haji Jamshed on issues of Afghans living in Camp-e-Marwarid and other parts of the city. As the state does not want to intervene too directly in the lives of Afghans, it needs middlemen like Haji Jamshed to manage these populations. In turn, actors like Haji Jamshed expand their power over populations they claim to represent. Their brokerage is usually part of a network or partnerships connected with other middlemen (Afghan and Pakistani) and government officials acting in informal ways. Afghans who do not have Pakistani identity cards are not of interest to political parties for votes in elections—which is also the case for Chatterjee’s informal citizens in India,<sup>84</sup> Roy’s subaltern urban subjects in India,<sup>85</sup> Bayat’s urban poor in Tehran or Cairo.<sup>86</sup> But Afghans who pay high rents, fees for connections to utilities and sanitation lines, are an important source of capital accumulation through outright extortion.

Haji Jamshed’s name was often mentioned with scathing discontent by residents—most of the people working to resolve the area’s water crisis purposely wanted to avoid his involvement in case he started to charge extra money. “These things are a big business for him. Think about how many houses are in Camp-e-Marwarid. Then think about how much electricity costs. Then think about how much he actually charges. He is not acting out of solidarity (*humdardi*). He uses the people to get money.”<sup>87</sup> Habibullah added:

He appropriates everything. He lives outside of this area. He has a Pakistani CNIC and everything [Pakistani documents]. But he creates problems within Afghan communities. He looks at us and knows he will make money from us. He has contacts to many people

and officials, so we cannot do anything. He charges high rents in the area. He also has some contacts with the local police. If someone takes issue with him, or some conflict arises, he uses his contacts in the police to have people arrested and charged with fake crimes.<sup>88</sup>

In another interview with Ahmed, a twenty-six-year-old Afghan shopkeeper who lived in an informal housing settlement in Sohrab Goth near Haji Jamshed, said: “I have seen Haji Jamshed throughout the years, since I was a child, as he intervenes in our area. Believe me when I say that he is so corrupt . . . he is constantly cheating people—either for money or even for the daughters and women of families. I was there last week when the police wrongly arrested a man. He phoned Haji Jamshed as an elder, to ask him for help, and he said I can help you get out of prison if you let me “see” your daughter. Imagine, he is an old man and a *haji* [a person who has made pilgrimage to Mecca]!”<sup>89</sup>

While others repeated this rumor, I was unable to verify if Haji Jamshed had indeed “asked for” the women of the more vulnerable Afghan families through any interviews with said women. However, at the very least, the prevalence of these rumors indicates the exploitative reputation of Haji Jamshed among ordinary Afghans in and around Camp-e-Marwarid. In these real or imagined accounts, Haji Jamshed is not acting to help vulnerable Afghans. Instead, he is performing sovereignty over the most vulnerable through sexual violence and sexualized power in a context in which the honor of a woman and daughter is paramount in constructions of selfhood—for men and women.

### Precarious Place-Making in the City

The ability of the settlement to thrive and grow, after it was pushed out into the *jangal* in 1986, was not guaranteed. In referring to the settlement discussed in this chapter, Camp-e-Marwarid, I have not used its real name. In line with the spirit of the residents of the camp, who referred to it in affectionate and positive terms, I opted for the pseudonym “Camp of the Pearl.” Despite the constraints they faced, the Afghans who moved to the settlement engaged in the social production of place. In Camp-e-Marwarid, Afghans, akin to other refugee groups, imprint their social organization and cultural maps on the camp despite the original intent of the (re)displacement of Afghans as a means of social and political segregation. Afghans gave the area meaning and definition through their regular, patterned activities in the area and the

material transformations they enacted. Residents built houses, roads, factories, shops, mosques, and sanitation systems. A daily and seasonal rhythm, social relations, and community organization marks life there. They were joined by Pakistanis, mainly from the Pashtun border regions, who have also contributed toward the growth of this neighborhood. These varied ethnicities and nationalities have worked together, cutting across lines of identity, bound together by shared vulnerabilities and the position of their neighborhood, and their status as an urban underclass in the city. These residents need each other and are conscious of the structural discriminations, a consciousness that compels them to act together: there is no attribution of misfortune to God, no superstition, no folktales. They work together to improve their lives, chipping away at the temporary status attached to them. These urban citizens are central to our understandings of urbanity and what it means to belong to the city. Yet as the end of the chapter shows, their struggle for rights is subject to the relations of power and profiteering by middlemen. Refugee life at the rural-to-urban interface is thus marked by vulnerability, where their capacity to act has its limitations. Nonetheless, residents continue on in their quest to improve their lives.

## CHAPTER 3

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### Bulldozers and Violence in a Pakistani Settlement

We will Witness  
Under our feet—the feet of the oppressed—  
When the earth will pulsate deafeningly  
And on the heads of our rulers  
When lightning will strike  
We will Witness.

—Faiz Ahmed Faiz, *Hum Dhekhenge* (We Will Witness)

The colonist's sector is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers. . . . The colonized's sector, or at least the "native" quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people.

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963

"I had to move last time. I will not do it again. How many more times can I move? I will die here, but I will not move from here. No. Not anymore!"<sup>1</sup> Bilqis was adamant that she would not leave her home again. She had moved to Karachi from rural Sindh with her family when she was a child. Now 27 years old, she had spent most of her life in the city, moving from one informal housing area to the next. Evictions had been a continuous feature of her life. On the day I first met her in 2010, she told me she had had enough. The area



she was living in was being threatened with demolition by a power broker in the city, but she was insistent that she would stay in the area.

After I left Karachi, Bilqis and I stayed in touch on the phone and via phone messages. In 2013, months after our first meeting, I was in Peshawar when she sent me a set of anxious messages after the threat of eviction resurfaced. “They came back”; “They broke peoples’ homes”; “They are about to evict us.” Finally, one night in 2013 Bilqis phoned me to tell me, “They [local power holders and the police] broke it down [the neighborhood]. We’ve left. Some people tried to stay, but how can you stay if there are no homes?”

I conducted interviews with Bilqis and other women in Ishtiaq Goth, an informal housing area at the outskirts of the city that is home to Pakistani citizens. At the start of my fieldwork in the area, a local power holder was threatening residents with evictions and the demolition of their homes. The threats continued after I left and eventually materialized: residents were expelled from the area. Working in Camp-e-Marwarid (see Chapter 2), a predominantly Afghan neighborhood, led me to consider whether nearby localities with higher percentages of Pakistani citizens face the same struggles as their Afghan counterparts. Did living in an area where most of the residents were citizens mean a better access to rights and resources in everyday life?

As I traveled and worked across various urban outposts, I was struck by the similarities in “Afghan” and “Pakistani” neighborhoods. The differences in day-to-day life between the citizen and refugee seemed minimal—although these differences would become clearer when it came to pressures of state- and UNHCR-led repatriation of Afghans (as discussed in Chapter 5.) In most aspects of everyday life, there appeared to be a shared precarious existence for those of comparable class standings; and it was this class status that determined the conditions of life for citizens and refugees alike.

This chapter builds on interviews I conducted with residents in the Pakistani-majority area of Ishtiaq Goth, and reconstructs how they worked together to try to safeguard the most basic of rights: the right to shelter, materialized in the protection of their homes against the ever-present threat of eviction. The chapter starts by plotting the background on how the area came into being, a story that shed light on the anti-poor bias that underpins urban planning in Karachi—led by the government, corporations, and architecture firms; next, it examines the centrality of middlemen in redistributive politics; and, finally, it details the strategies of residents who resist housing demolitions, purposive campaigns which allow a site for emergent politics and new social forms of collaboration and solidarity to emerge. Where popular

literature on urbanity in the Global South verges on the apocalyptic,<sup>2</sup> this chapter explores the (admittedly limited) agency of those who live in informal housing settlements, to understand their quest to reclaim a part of the city as their own.

### Ishtiaq Goth

Ishtiaq Goth lies on the outskirts of Karachi's metropolitan boundaries. Residents of the area were low-income Pakistanis of different ethnic backgrounds: primarily Kashmiris, Sindhis, Southern Punjabis, Baloch, and Pakistani muhajirs. I started to visit the area after being introduced to it by Mohsin, a "community project coordinator," employed by the then City District Government of Karachi (CDGK) (now the Karachi Municipal Council). Mohsin worked on the "I Own Karachi" initiative, which aims to improve civic engagement among residents of Karachi by including them in community infrastructure and beautification schemes. The CDGK was not doing anything in Ishtiaq Goth, though, Mohsin said: "The people of this area face a lot of challenges. . . . But my office offers them nothing. There are no funds available for them."

On my first visit to the area, Mohsin drove me there in his green 1988 Mazda and then diligently waited for me to complete my interviews before driving me back toward the CDGK (our meeting point). After Mohsin's introduction to the area, I developed my own relationships with residents independently that allowed me to conduct further interviews. Mohsin had also introduced me to Omar Tariq, a middleman of the area, in another part of the city, which then allowed me to interview him in his home in a government-recognized *katchi abadi*, the government-recognized *katchi abadi* of his parents-in-law, as well as in Ishtiaq Goth.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of my fieldwork, Ishtiaq Goth was under the control of Omar Tariq and a man named Ishtiaq Mohammad,<sup>4</sup> a landlord and local power holder who had (informally) managed to name the settlement after himself—a practice, I learned, that was common, reflecting the extraordinary power of mediators such as Ishtiaq Mohammad over the populations over whom they preside.<sup>5</sup> Many informal areas that are on private agricultural land on the city's rural-to-urban interface are named after the landlord/claimant and *goth* is the suffix attached to that name.

Residents were primarily factory workers, day laborers, or unemployed. Those who worked traveled long distances on foot, bicycle, and used local

buses to get to work. No one owned a car or motorbike. Most houses were *katcha* (mud/unfinished) houses, or a combination of *katcha* and *pakka* (concrete/finished) structures. Unlike Camp-e-Marwarid, there were no electricity lines—although talks were underway between Omar Tariq, Ishtiaq Mohammad, and a Karachi Electricity Supplies Company representative. As in Camp-e-Marwarid, water was provided by commercial water tankers that delivered water to the few under-tanks in the area; its delivery was similarly unpredictable. Local roads, sanitation, and infrastructure were constructed by residents or contractors hired by Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad.

Most of the residents of Ishtiaq Goth had lived in Karachi for twenty years or were born and raised in the city with their parents or grandparents moving from rural areas in Pakistan. Nearly all the residents moved to Ishtiaq Goth after being evicted or unable to pay rent in other parts of the city. A smaller number of residents were more recent migrants, including persons whose lives were affected by the 2010 floods. Sindh was especially affected by the floods, in which 411 people were killed and 2.8 million left in need of emergency assistance.<sup>6</sup> As government support often fell short of peoples' needs, many moved to Karachi in search of jobs and homes; most people ended up living in the city's swelling informal housing settlements on the outskirts of the city.

### **The *Katchi Abadi* and the *Goth*: Squatter Settlements in Karachi**

Karachi's housing crisis dates back to the moment of partition in 1947 when the city's population surged through forced migration. Estimates vary, but some 60 to 70 percent of the city's residents live in informal housing, of which there are two main types: the *katchi abadi* and the informal subdivision of agricultural land (ISAL)—the latter is commonly called a *goth*, a Sindhi term. The former refers primarily to informal squatter settlements on state land; the latter are, for the most part, built on private land.

In everyday vernacular, the *katchi abadi* can be used to refer to all types of informal housing settlements, including the ISAL/*goth*. This terminology is revealing in that it points to informal homes as being described as unfinished/raw—*katchi* translates as raw, *abadi* as human settlement—a term derived from “*ab*,” Farsi for water. The term *katchi abadi* carries an identity, then, of a sense of housing that is “in process,” rather than a finished project.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile the popular nomenclature of the *goth* reveals how these areas,

situated as they are at the rural-to-urban interface, are discursively imagined as still attached to a village/rural form, or “not really urban.”<sup>8</sup>

Today most of Karachi’s legal *katchi abadis* (informal settlements built on state land), have either been dismantled and removed or regularized and absorbed into the realm of official government policy making. Arif Hasan and Masooma Mohib distinguish between two types of *katchi abadis*.<sup>9</sup> The first are notified *katchi abadis*, which are settlements built on state land and earmarked for regularization through a ninety-nine-year lease and government development plans. The second are nonnotified *katchi abadis*, which are settlements built on state land that will not be regularized—because they are built on valuable land required for state development, or deemed to be on “unsafe” land.

Notified *katchi abadis* are incorporated into the formal structures of the state through the 1987 Sindh Katchi Abadi Act. Notified *katchi abadis* are managed by the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA). The SKAA cut-off date for the regulation of housing built on state land was 30 June 1997 (extended from 1987). Since the 1997 cut-off date, despite state land being well-occupied, informal settlements have continued to grow across Karachi. Since the late 1990s, informal settlements in the city are primarily built on private land—the ISALs/*goths*—and most are situated at the rural-to-urban interface of the city. Today ISALs/*goths* are key to understanding Karachi’s growing urban sprawl. Most ISALs/*goths* emerge from old villages, hence the name Sohrab Goth, Ishtiaq Goth, and so on. The exact number of ISALs/*goths* is not known. Press reports place the figure at 588 and the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), which works in these areas, places the figure at 2,173.<sup>10</sup> Irrespective of the numbers, it is clear that ISALs/*goths* are now a significant feature of the urban landscape and a key housing resource for low- and even middle-income citizens, internally displaced persons, undocumented migrants, and refugees. Yet unlike previous *katchi abadis*, there are no programs to regularize and improve conditions for ISAL residents. Further, unlike formal refugee or displaced person camps in other parts of Pakistan, there is no international or local humanitarian support. Instead, the conditions in the area depend, first, on whether or not there is clarity about land ownership; second, upon the power and objectives of the landlord/land claimant/patron, or middlemen—who mediate between populations and the state; and third, the actions of the residents themselves who may work to pool resources and improve infrastructure in the area (roads, sanitation lines, garbage clearance). In informal housing areas if the landholder has a clear grip on the area, the area usually fares

well in terms of access to resources; when clarity over land tenure is absent this leads to insecurity for residents. As I will discuss, Ishtiaq Goth is an ISAL with weak land tenure.

### No Homes for the Urban Poor

The right to shelter and housing is understood as a universal human right<sup>11</sup> and is set out in a series of Pakistani laws and policies, including the Pakistani constitution (Article 38d) and the 2000 *National Housing Policy*.<sup>12</sup> But residents of Ishtiaq Goth—and other spaces across Karachi—have been unable to gain secure shelter or housing (be it free/rented/owned) through official channels. The reasons for this are multilayered and will be discussed now.

Karachi is a megacity, one of the world's largest metropolitan areas. It is the capital of Sindh; it houses 30 percent of Sindh's urban population and 22 percent of all Pakistan's urban population.<sup>13</sup> The city has an urbanization rate of 5.4 percent per year.<sup>14</sup> As we have seen in Chapter 2, Karachi's rapid urbanization is driven by the reproduction of poverty, war, and ecological disasters, not by the supply of jobs and economic growth.<sup>15</sup> Karachi's rapid unplanned expansion has resulted in an inadequate supply of basic resources or absence of discernible infrastructures and institutions.

This inadequacy is not, however, simply a consequence of the city being overburdened by uncontrolled population growth; nor do Karachi's shortcomings affect its populations equally. In Karachi—as is the case elsewhere—there is poor and conflicting coordination across government departments responsible for urban land and housing. The state does not function as a coherent, unified entity, but it is muddled, with competing departments, each with its own agenda.<sup>16</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are thirteen land-controlling and management authorities, which have “various levels of powers to plan, develop and maintain land under their jurisdictions, and have varying standards and sets of by-laws, resulting in conflicts of interests and issues in overall planning and functioning of the city.”<sup>17</sup> All of this means there is bureaucratic confusion within the state as to who exactly should be guaranteeing housing availability and maintaining housing standards.

For the urban poor and lower middle classes, renting or buying a home through official channels and in regulated housing areas is too expensive in monetary terms (upfront costs, deposits, and taxation) and in terms of time. Long bureaucratic processes—filling out forms, traveling to and waiting in

different clerical offices and queues—create lost work and income opportunities. Additionally, bureaucratic confusion often prohibits direct engagement with officialdom. It is often cheaper and quicker to bypass legal structures and navigate the state through a middleman or patron.

Moreover, urban planning circles—including those of the military, the largest landholder in the country<sup>18</sup>—are underpinned by what Arif Hasan calls an “anti-poor bias.”<sup>19</sup> Hasan argues that there are plenty of housing schemes in Karachi, but they are geared toward generating profit, not alleviating housing shortages; the housing crisis is unresolved because of an ideological choice to not make life better for the poor and lower middle classes. Nausheen Anwar and Sarwat Viqar add that Karachi’s urban redevelopment aims to produce a “sanitized” and “secure” cosmopolitan city that is premised on eliminating the undesirable and underprivileged.<sup>20</sup> This is backed up by commonly held views among the state, ruling elites, and the upper and middle classes that see the poor as being “stuck” in poverty, and so they are constructed as deserving of their fate.<sup>21</sup> As Fanon explains on the question of urban inequality, the colonized, the poor, and the racialized are pathologized, but the rich, the colonists are lauded for a supposedly natural superiority.<sup>22</sup>

From 2000 onward, Karachi’s urban planning circles were concerned with making the city “world class.”<sup>23</sup> This idea had significant traction during the alliance between General/President Musharraf, a muhajir, and the Karachi mayor, MQM’s Mustafa Kamal (in office 2005–2010).<sup>24</sup> This partnership pushed forward massive construction projects for private housing schemes in the city, many of which have taken on a life of their own since then. These include extensions of the Defence Housing Authority (DHA), run by the military, but it also includes Bahria Town, directed by the Punjabi property tycoon Malik Riaz, and the transformation of Karachi’s coastline by the Dubai-based multinational corporation, Emaar. None of these cater for the poor. As scholars, activists, and policy makers note, on the other hand, per capita investment in the planning and delivery of housing and infrastructure projects for the urban poor is exceptionally low.<sup>25</sup>

In Karachi, it is not that the state denies or fails to provide basic housing rights for the poor. It actively displaces them through evictions and demolitions of peoples’ homes.<sup>26</sup> State-led, or public-private “mega-projects,” such as the building the Lyari Expressway (launched in 2002) required people living along the planned motorway to be removed and resettled for the greater good. Resettlements, however, were rarely executed.<sup>27</sup> It is incredibly difficult to get accurate numbers of people displaced from government, commercial,

or informal evictions or housing demolitions. The Urban Resource Centre (URC), says that from 1996 to 2002, forced evictions by government agencies impacted 40,900 houses and displaced 286,300 people in Karachi.<sup>28</sup> From 2002 to 2012, 30,000 families from within the city were displaced to peripheral areas.<sup>29</sup> The majority were displaced without compensation or resettlement on alternative land, which contradicts the 2001 National Housing Policy.<sup>30</sup> These figures do not include evictions by private landowners, middlemen, or the land mafia, which would make the number of displaced significantly higher.

Many of Karachi's displacements are the result of contests over land between different state institutions and departments, for example, between the military and government,<sup>31</sup> or because of land-grabs on private or state-owned land. In the case of the latter, contests take place between various informal entrepreneurs, also known as the "land mafia," who are tied to state patrons or political parties, and in some cases are employees of the state itself.<sup>32</sup> The emergence of these interests is a direct consequence of systemic failures in urban planning for the poor and a willingness of government officials to turn a blind eye to informal practices or, in some cases, to directly profit from it. Middlemen effectively manage and govern populations and people that the state cannot and will not (this was also evident in Camp-e-Marwarid in Chapter 2). Karachi's post-1947 rapid expansions have always relied on informal processes to manage the growing population in the city. This complements neoliberal economic approaches to governance that assume the market and entrepreneurship will resolve social issues and inequality with limited direct state intervention.

Yet when it comes to housing, middlemen, political parties, landlords, and state actors occupy "commercial plots, government land, and under regulated housing areas—often through violent or illegal means, including intimidation, forgery, bribery, and arson—and sell them to the highest bidders."<sup>33</sup> Often these actors use official housing and building norms, laws, and regulations to guide their actions and, in many ways, they end up providing basic services for a massive urban population, but problems arise when land speculation causes them to evict and demolish ordinary peoples' homes. Inequalities are often not redressed, but exacerbated.

Critically, it is important to keep in mind the informal is not a separate economic, political, and cultural zone that is beyond the "modern"—an argument that was made by early studies on the informal economy.<sup>34</sup> Rather, the formal and informal spheres are two sides of the same coin.<sup>35</sup> Within the informal sphere middlemen, brokers, and patrons are also central to urban

governance and the making of power in the city. The informal tells us about how power functions and how the state operates. As Huma Yusuf's work explains, "political parties rely on land mafias to provide real estate, utilities connections, roads, and other infrastructure for their constituents in areas that have been illegally and thus poorly developed."<sup>36</sup> In return, land grabbers, "use political connections to regularize squatter settlements, gain permission to convert amenity plots (allocated for parks and community centres) into commercial or residential property, and secure permits to develop properties, often purchased for a fraction of their market value after threats or acts of violence."<sup>37</sup>

### **The Power Brokers of Ishtiaq Goth**

In the beginning years of this century, Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad began the informal subdivision of Ishtiaq Goth's (private) agricultural land. Then they went about populating it—that is they encouraged and brought people to live in it. This strategy appears to have empowered them as middlemen mediating between residents and the state to say the area had a right to exist in moral terms.<sup>38</sup> Scholarship on squatting tends to focus on how people occupy land; however, my research suggests sometimes the decision is made by a middleman.

Omar Tariq described himself as a "property developer." He was, in his words, Ishtiaq Mohammad's "business partner." Together they were building homes on land they claimed was owned by Ishtiaq Mohammad. I asked him why he was building homes in the area, to which he replied "*Yeh zamin to investment hai*" (this land is an investment). Omar Tariq was born and raised in Karachi, after his parents migrated to the city from Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the early 1960s. His late father was a street hawker, who sold vegetables in the local katchi abadi. His mother, Tahira, spends her days at home: a small ground-floor house with a dilapidated roof and walls.<sup>39</sup>

Though his family might be classified as a part of the urban poor, Omar Tariq was on an upwardly mobile course toward becoming a part of the lower middle class. He went to a government high school, shortly after which he started a small but profitable trading business with friends and extended-family members. During the time when I was conducting fieldwork, he was living with his wife and four sons who supported him in his business. In 2006–2007, he entered what he called the "property business" with Ishtiaq Mohammad. In



Ishtiaq Goth, Omar Tariq's main role was to provide the required capital for the area and to use his social, political, and cultural networks to bring people to live there. In a city notorious for ethnic conflict, the collaboration between Omar Tariq, a Pashtun, and Ishtiaq Mohammad, an ethnic Sindhi, underlines the strength of "weak ties"<sup>40</sup> in profiteering of this kind, which thrives parasitically by individuals prepared to exploit their own ethnic groups.

Ishtiaq Mohammad claimed landholding rights to the area and was a grassroots member of the Pakistan's Peoples Party (PPP), a center-left party that has strong roots in rural Sindh and thus often at the rural-to-urban periphery of Karachi—it is also known as the party of the political Bhutto family. The party dominates at the provincial level and has historically been a force in national politics, despite losing ground in recent years. However, Ishtiaq Mohammad told me that he had fallen out with PPP actors and said his claims to land in Ishtiaq Goth had been weakened as a result. He insisted, however, that he was the "legal owner of the land," adding: "the land has been in my family for generations," but admitted he had no legal documentation to prove his ownership. It appears his claim was that of a "native resident" to Sindhi land. In other words, although it is possible that he or his wider kin networks may have owned or previously occupied the land, his claim was no more than an ethnonationalist political claim of being a Sindhi son of the soil—which, presumably, could be challenged by any other "native" Sindhi laying claim to the land. Indeed, a rival Sindhi middleman had secured the backing of the PPP and was doing just that.

As in Camp-e-Marwarid, the legal rights to, and responsibilities of Ishtiaq Goth were unclear, leaving residents vulnerable to exploitation by state and nonstate actors; in this case, private individuals and interests presented the main threat, rather than state power. In Ishtiaq Goth, Ishtiaq Mohammad and Omar Tariq offered people who otherwise have difficulties in purchasing and accessing land, shelter, homes, and basic infrastructure (water, electricity, gas, and sanitation), a chance to access these. Individual and unfinished brick and tent structures were gradually being transformed into permanent housing. At the time of my fieldwork, parts of the settlement were less than a year old, others had been present for over eight years.

Ishtiaq Mohammad and Omar Tariq wanted to show me the construction processes for land plots that are given/rented out to settlers. Initially, I was perplexed as to why both men were adamant that I understand how the area was being "developed." Gradually, it became clear that they viewed me as someone who may have access to institutions and political networks. Both

men presented themselves as benevolent patrons engaging in the distribution of rights and resources to the most vulnerable members of society. On one occasion, they gave me a tour of the area to show me how the homes were built. They started off by walking me through the newest parts of the area—empty plots—and we continued through the locality to the houses that had been there for eight years. They told me how the housing settlements were made, roughly, in accordance with government housing and planning regulations and guidelines. Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad said, “You see here we have the space for water lines, if the government recognizes us”; “We have left space for gas lines, if the government recognizes us”; “The sanitation waste could connect up to the sewage systems from here”; and so on—the word “if” encapsulating the precarious nature of the area’s land tenure.

In Ishtiaq Goth, the so-called informal forms of redistributing resources Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad engaged in were simple attempts to follow legal procedures by informally enacting/enforcing rules with the hope that the area would eventually be incorporated into formal urban governance structures. Yet these rules were followed in a rudimentary style; neither Omar Tariq nor Ishtiaq Mohammad knew the numerous laws, statutes, and regulations relating to housing in Karachi, such as building by-laws and zoning regulations, which, if better followed, could contribute to a safer and healthier and more secure physical, ecological, and social environment. Indeed, residents complained that the materials the builders used were cheap and would quickly fall apart. They were worried about their sewage lines getting blocked; they had no direct connections in their homes to basic utilities; they complained that their homes were smaller than they had been promised by Omar Tariq.

After the housing plots were constructed, or even during the construction process, various “settlers” were encouraged to “sit” (*bhetna*)/occupy housing plots: “we were made to sit here,” I was told. Residents said that the housing structures they lived in were initially free, usually for a period of twelve to thirty-six months, during which time Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad encouraged them to improve, expand, and in some cases even construct the structure and sanitation systems themselves. After a short while, they were asked to pay rents. It was evident that Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad are profiteering from the informal housing market.

In one house, Omar Tariq encouraged survivors of the 2010 flood, Maq-sud, his wife, and uncle, from near Jacobabad (Sindh) to settle on a housing plot—initially free of charge. Maq-sud and his family moved to Karachi because the floods had devastated their homes. Maq-sud had not lived in

Karachi before. He had limited support networks and found Omar Tariq through an employer from his work as a day laborer. Maqsud's home was basic in structure. There was a two-meter-high outer boundary wall with a doorway, one inner wall, and a partial roof made of tin and tarpaulin. The rest was open space, making the area look spacious—around fifty square meters. A few cooking utensils and a trunk full of their possessions lay in the corner of a partially constructed room where there were also materials for a wood fire. There were two *charpoys*, one was being used to sit on and the other was backed up against the wall. Maqsud explained he, his wife, and uncle would build the house. He said, "Omar [Tariq] *bhai* (brother) brought us in to occupy this land. Ishtiaq Mohammad then said that we can have it for six months for free. God willing, the plan is to stay here. We are trying to make this house, but there is a lot to do."<sup>41</sup> The term *bhai* (brother) is a term used within family units, attached as a suffix to the name of a brother or cousins, and is used connoting trust and affection, as well as an acknowledgment of the greater power that the elder brother holds within the nuclear/joint-family structure. In everyday life, the term is used for nonfamily members as a sign of respect. Yet the term can also be used to designate and critique power. In some ways, by referring to Omar Tariq with the term *bhai*, Maqsud reflects the self-image of benevolence that Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad were trying to cultivate in the area. "I tell people, I am their brother, I am here for them," Omar Tariq told me. But residents also uttered the term with cynicism in reference to the unequal power he holds over residents.

Maqsud did not really get the land for free. He was expected to pay Ishtiaq Mohammad and Omar Tariq back at a later date. He was in debt. Clear that I was unfamiliar with the politics of the area and, perhaps fearful that I would leave with a good impression of Ishtiaq Mohammad and Omar Tariq, Maqsud said, "What, you think he is not going to take money from us? We owe him . . . you don't know how things work here. The debt I have now scares me."<sup>42</sup>

All the residents of the older houses in the area paid high rents; they too had initially lived in the area rent free. I interviewed Gul Nabi, who had moved to the area from Southern Punjab with his brother around 2005. His wife and two daughters arrived in the area from their village and were attempting to adjust to city life. He explained, "Initially we did not have to pay Ishtiaq Mohammad. He brought us over and told us to settle in. . . . But slowly then we started to have to pay him rent. The money built up and now we have to pay him a lot more."<sup>43</sup> The risks of living on the outskirts of the city—without access to health care, transport, and livelihoods—were not borne by

ones like Ishtiaq Mohammad or Omar Tariq. Omar Tariq lived in his home in a regularized katchi abadi that was close to the city center, as did Ishtiaq Mohammad.

The problems residents of Ishtiaq Goth had to contend with underlined the specific hardships life at the urban-to-rural interface. Residents explained: "It gets so cold at night in the cooler seasons and even the summer. I fear the cold so much, it is so painful [shudders]. And once you have no light outside in this area there is no way that you can go outside. It feels almost as if you are standing in the middle of a graveyard . . . you cannot leave. There is no light here. We are living in darkness. Literally. You are here during the day; you cannot stay beyond *maghrib* [evening prayer]."<sup>44</sup> Gul Nabi's daughters, both in their late teens, repeatedly told me how scared they feel at night in the darkness. They said, "We moved here from our village in the Punjab, but we never used to be scared there. Even in our village we had electricity, but here there is nothing. We just sit together at night. We can hear the wild dogs barking. It feels so eerie. You never want to go out alone. We also do not know who is coming and going in the area. We hate the nights here." For Gul Nabi's daughters, their location on the outskirts of Karachi, without any electricity, does not allow them to feel that they are a part of a city. They do not live in the so-called *roshanion ka shehr* (city of lights), but on its margins. They said: "We went to a government school in our village. But now we're in Karachi and there is no school [close to us] here. We don't know what to do in the day. There are no shops or things to see near to us . . . and then we are scared at night."<sup>45</sup>

Others explained, "There is no health service near us. There is not even a chemist's shop here. How can we cope . . . there is nothing here." Residents traveled significant distances to access any forms of free or expensive private health care. During fieldwork at various sites, illnesses and cases of tuberculosis and hepatitis C were recorded.

Households were also subject to their self-constructed sewage systems frequently becoming blocked and overflowing when it rained. In Ishtiaq Goth, basic physical survival is possible but often only just, and usually it is a physically and physiologically hazardous survival.

For some scholars, the poor find queuing in government offices and going through bureaucratic red tape a waste of time and money—especially in terms of wages lost by long bureaucratic process.<sup>46</sup> Others, such as Chatterjee, say that informal channels offer richer spaces for "democracy" and the subversion of the bourgeois lifestyle.<sup>47</sup> In Chatterjee's work, the prevention of law is what people want.<sup>48</sup> While for Asef Bayat, the quiet encroachments of the

ordinary are concerned with “attaining autonomy, both cultural and political, from the regulations, institutions, and discipline imposed by the state and modern institutions.”<sup>49</sup> People want to base their relationships on “reciprocity, trust, and negotiation rather than on the modern notions of individual self-interest, fixed rules, and contracts,” he says.<sup>50</sup>

In Ishtiaq Goth, the residents I encountered desperately wanted a legal status because it might offer some route to a better quality of life than what was on offer by the middlemen. They repeatedly expressed their hope for order, regulation, and access granted through the implementation of laws. Even their status as moral subjects depended upon attaining a certain respectability that comes with being distinguished from that which is criminal/illegal. Ultimately, this too could only be provided by legal recognition from the state.

### Awaiting Legality

Families with enough capital and experiential knowledge of how the informal urban housing market worked purchased the land that was initially given to them to “sit” on by Omar Tariq and Ishtiaq Mohammad. They bought this land via informal verbally agreed transactions and agreements. No paper documents were exchanged and no visits were made to government offices to make the land transfers official. There were no *sanads* (certificates), no *pat-waris* (government officials), no thumbprints, no signatures. Residents who “owned” the land were clear, “this is now our land,” they told me. The assumption was that official ownership would follow once the area was legalized. Nilofar, the female household head of a Sindhi family that had purchased a plot and built the basic housing structure explained: “This is our house. We gave Rs. 7,000–8,000 as an advance to them [Ishtiaq Mohammad and Omar Tariq] and then we did everything ourselves. We are paying him for the land, but it is ours. We built the walls up ourselves, the rooms, and the doors. We did these things ourselves, without hiring labor. This is our home now. God willing, the area will get made.”<sup>51</sup> Nilofar’s case is an important way of understanding the informal exchange of land rights where the state is bypassed. It is also an indication of the temporal aspects of precarity at the rural-to-urban interface. Her reference to the area “getting made”—the area will get made, *bane-ga/ban jaye ga* (future tense) —was one I heard frequently among my interlocutors when they defended their hopes for the future.

At one level, these statements reflect an optimism that their lives would, eventually, improve—a time when the area would be incorporated into state-led infrastructure, welfare, and development projects. The residents of Ishtiaq Goth were waiting it out, an example of what Asef Bayat calls the “art of presence”<sup>52</sup>—whereby something exists in place that cannot be reversed in moral and political terms—or using “time” as a technique to get what they need.<sup>53</sup>

The area did not get access to any basic utilities from city and provincial planning authorities. Residents were also left vulnerable to exploitation by local police officers who frequently demanded *bhatta* (protection money).

Moreover, there are no guarantees that “waiting” will bring any kind of permanence at all. The possibilities of an eviction or their homes being demolished played on the minds of residents. The position of their middleman was weakening; the rival power holder kept on transgressing into the area. In Ishtiaq Goth, veteran city dwellers, such as Bilqis, knew that evictions or demolition were certain. They just did not know when they would take place and if they would be of the entire neighborhood. For Bilqis and others, their emotional and physical well-being was characterized by fear, threats, and anxieties of an inevitable—but undetermined—loss of their homes.

At the same time, however, the precarious status of the areas did not incapacitate the residents. It pushed them to resist the possibilities of eviction and demolitions and continue to engage in processes of place-making, even if they were aware that a future destruction was likely.

### **Bulldozers, Violence, and Gendered Spaces of Mobilization**

When we met, Tabassum Khala was in her mid-to-late fifties. A Pakistani muhajir, she lived with her son, Zuhaib, who was in his mid-twenties and often in search of work in factories or daily wage labor. People in Ishtiaq Goth called her *khala*, a term of respect and affection that literally meant maternal aunt. Tabassum Khala was at home on the day her house was demolished; Zuhaib was at work. The building contractors entered the area with the protection of the police and mechanical power of a bulldozer. It appears they targeted her home, which was situated on a corner plot on the edges of the locality, as she was one of the weaker residents, that is without a large family and often alone. She pleaded with the contractors and police to not tear down her home, a plea also made by other residents of the area, mainly women, who had come out of their houses when they heard the bulldozers and police

cars approaching. The police responded with force, pushing and hitting the women, who could only watch as Tabassum Khala and her son were left homeless, with only a few salvaged possessions. The violence to which Tabassum Khala was subjected inflicted trauma upon all the residents of the area, whose vulnerability to a similar fate was brought home in terrifying fashion.

A strong sense of a localized community was present among the women in Ishtiaq Goth, who were bound together by a shared precarious status, an uncertain future, and the emotions this produced. The residents were from different ethnic backgrounds; but as Laura Ring's work on gender and cooperation in Karachi shows, in multiethnic neighborhoods women's exchanges between households—visiting, borrowing, helping—builds bridges across ethnic differences.<sup>54</sup> Given that most of the women do not participate in the labor market and spend most of their time in the neighborhood, their exchanges are central to the making of place-based identity. Working on informality in Delhi, India, Ayona Datta borrows the phrase “mongrel city” to describe the fragile balance of a cosmopolitan neighborliness that underpins informal urban spaces.<sup>55</sup> Here, despite ethnic differences, necessity and shared interests dictate an openness to others. The emotional traumas of precarity, the visceral fear of destitution, and feelings of empowerment through collective activities held the people of this space together.

I asked residents to recall the processes by which Tabassum Khala's house was demolished. During the interview Fahmida said, “We were all crying. We were all shedding tears; it was enough to be like an ocean. It was the first place that she has had as her own. We all stood by her . . . but they came without notice [and without telling us].”<sup>56</sup> The women in the area were cognizant of the pain Tabassum Khala felt after finally getting a place of her own only to have it taken away. Their tears were of solidarity and recognition of Tabassum Khala's precarious situation and their own. This was a neighborhood that felt and acted together. As they stood with Tabassum Khala, their physical presence an indication of a bond of friendship and care to counterbalance—albeit ineffectively—the brutal, masculinized power of the building contractors, the police, and the mechanical force of the bulldozers.

The women of the area provided Tabassum Khala with food, shelter, and moral support, underlying the existence of a shared sense of belonging in this contested space. Women moved through the area frequently, especially on days when most men were working, and interacted with other women for social reasons, to share food, and in some cases to pool labor (washing, child rearing, cleaning). This would especially happen during times of crisis,

such as the bulldozing of Tabassum Khala's home. A neighbor took Tabassum Khala into her home until she was able to rebuild her *katcha* house, which was only possible in slow, piecemeal steps. Zuhaib, her son, stayed with friends, and saved what money he could from his day labor. Eventually he took out a loan from Omar Tariq to buy materials to rebuild the house himself. Through these actions, residents work to reassert the dignity and safety of a displaced neighbor; her belonging in the neighborhood and its own sense of place were (re)constructed in this process, which restored a sense of security to all those who shared her trauma.

### Confronting Violence

Women and men in the area regularly met and discussed what to do “next time the standoff takes place”—the question was not if there would be a standoff, but when. Residents recognized a need to meet in order to attempt to safeguard each other through defensive, organized acts of direct resistance against the looming threat of violence from the state and private interests.

Before I started my fieldwork in the area, three young boys had been killed after a group of men, suspected to be connected to the rival power broker, shot them. Apparently, gunfire had become a routine part of life on this urban outskirt. Describing the conditions of Ishtiaq Goth, Bilqis, one of the most vocal women of the neighborhood said, “Ishtiaq Goth is like this [violent] now. And it is just up to us to have courage and fight it out and see what we can do here. It has been a year since the conditions have got tougher. This place was made by gunfire. . . . It was built on bullets.”<sup>57</sup> After Tabassum Khala's home was targeted, a series of violent confrontations and standoffs with the rival power broker's builders and the police continued. During these events Omar Tariq was nowhere to be seen. Ishtiaq Mohammad occasionally visited. But the area's residents, including Bilqis, did not simply wait to be kicked out of the area. They continued to set about organizing a defense against the threat of their homes being bulldozed.

Bilqis was from a politically conscious family of PPP supporters who were well versed in a language of critique of the state and power. But it was more the exposure to violence that made her understand Karachi's politics and her role in it: you had to fight for an area to remain in place.

Bilqis's statements were also part of a conscious remaking of her right to the city and to not be pushed out of her home. She was, in her understanding,



engaged in an act of localized community organization to prevent the area from being torn down. Here, the shared neighborhood space and the emotional friendships of the women in the area bring together shared resources, their bodies, in a standoff. Each time the builders came with the bulldozers or to scout the area, the residents of the area stood together to deter demolition. Some women from poorer families and newer migrant backgrounds were more anxious about participating in the standoffs. Some male heads of households disapproved of their actions. However, in the group interview, most of the residents articulated a shared local identity and material reality:

We<sup>58</sup> had already lost three boys, they were shot last time. . . . And before that they broke down Tabassum Khala's house . . . we weren't going to let them do this again. When we heard that the police were here, all of us women of this area got ourselves together. Everyone came to this house, we all stood here. We knew something would happen. We got things together, what we could, stones. . . . But they came at us, the builders, and their bulldozers; they came at us with tear gas. They threw gas on us and we came out holding our Qurans, but it was of no use. They came two months ago, and they did the same a year ago. They are still demanding things. But we have nothing. We have nowhere else to go. Where can we go? But they will not leave us in peace here . . . we have said that we will not move from this place. Others have had to move from areas before. [Bilqis speaks loudest] I had to move last time; I will not do it again. How many more times can I move? I will die here, but I won't move from here. No. Not anymore!

In some cases, the women explained their actions of standing together, distributing food, and building the area, through a prism of faith or shared cultural practices. Feeding and housing Tabassum Khala was a *farz* (duty), sharing food brings *barkat* (blessings), and standing up against *zulm* (oppression/tyranny) and the *zalim* (oppressor/tyrant) is a duty of Muslims. I was told that it is through the "strength of God"/*Allah ke taqat se*, the "mercy of God"/*Allah ke rehmi ke sath* that residents believed they will be able to "stay on this land." For the people of Ishtiaq Goth, their calls to *Allah* and *khuda* are important cosmological bearings that offered a space of comfort, solidarity, and key glimmers of hope. When residents come out of their houses holding the Quran over their heads, the holy book offers symbolic protection and acts

as a moral symbolic reminder and assertion of the residents', as well as the police's and private contractor's, humanity (as understood through Islam). Here, the use of religious prisms is not tied to Islamist political mobilization or women's organizations, which have gained attention in public and academic writings in recent years. Rather it is reflective of how the urban poor make sense of the socioeconomic inequalities that shape their everyday lives through the use of cosmological framings and religion.<sup>59</sup>

Importantly, by securing shelter and the right of their neighborhood to exist—a basic right—residents explain their actions through moral and humanizing frames, of a desire to be recognized as existing beyond the paradigms of the marginalized, criminalized, and subhuman poor. In addition, the residents are claiming their rights to the resources (land) of the city. They are claiming the fulfillment of basic needs (shelter, housing, community, access to utilities) rather than an abstract ideal of citizenship or national identity.

During the larger group interview, Zinat, a Baloch resident said, "We want homes, too. Are we not entitled to have a home?"<sup>60</sup> This sense of entitlement was reflected in the self-worth that stubbornly remained in the vocabulary of my interlocutors, despite so many attempts by their tormentors to destroy it. Concepts of self-worth, such as *izzat* (honor), *hausala* (courage, with patience and nerve), and *himat* (courage with willpower), permeated the narratives collected in this area and were expressed via action. Referring to the standoff with the police, Bilqis continued, proudly, "The women here showed great bravery. We demonstrated real nerve. We too are strong."<sup>61</sup> As in Camp-e-Marwarid (although of a different type and scale), social solidarity networks—of neighborhood friendships and a common cause—are crucial components in providing a lifeline of support and the capacity of a neglected population to survive, as well as a space for self-humanization and a critique of local power structures.

### Devalued Citizens and the Reign of the Middleman

The story of this Pakistani settlement and its people provides an important point of comparison with the lives of noncitizens of comparable socioeconomic standings. Both citizens and noncitizens rely on similar horizontal social networks, vertical patronage networks, and piecemeal forms of community mobilization to survive and improve their lives. The residents of Ishtiaq Goth are legal citizens, but they find themselves at the spatial and

social margins of the city. Legal belonging does not necessarily mean a better standard of life than that of the noncitizen. Yet residents are cognizant of their power and capacity to act, even when the odds are stacked against them. They work together to try to get access to rights and goods, and by doing so engage in place-making in the city. They do so not as citizens or natives with indigenous claims to the soil, but as humans with a moral right to exist and to better their lives. It is this understanding of a shared, moral struggle that pushes actors to work together across ethnic and national lines. It is in these spaces that a powerful urban identity that is premised on a language of rights emerges in the South Asian city.

The story of Ishtiaq Goth, however, also reveals how the state relies on middlemen and patrons to manage populations it cannot and does not want to manage itself. The result for those living in informal settlements is for their lives to be riddled with insecurities, which are understood to be the direct consequence of a common failing of the state. As Bilqis said, “What does the government [*hukumat*] care? We are the poor, and for them we are nothing. . . . But this [poverty] is not our doing; it is theirs.”

Ishtiaq Goth was demolished. People laid down their lives for this neighborhood, to have a place to call home, but, on this occasion, they did not succeed. In the face of the violence they were subjected to, residents were compelled to move to other parts of the city where they tried to rebuild their lives and homes once more. Amid state failings, neglect, and exploitations by middlemen, after their eviction, the scope and capacity to continue to organize and resist remained with those who had once lived in Ishtiaq Goth. People take with them the knowledge and lived experiences of evictions to their new settlements and hope that, next time, the story will be different—a hope guided by a lucid recognition of their claim to the city and its resources.

## CHAPTER 4

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### Peshawar's Afghan Transformation

In our village in Afghanistan my husband had a small shop; he used to sell fried chips. In the 1970s they [the PDPA] conscripted men into the army. To avoid conscription, we [my husband and his brothers] moved from our village in Nangarhar [Afghanistan] to Peshawar where we also looked for work. This was the time when [Zulfiqar Ali] Bhutto was in power.

In the [Soviet-Afghan] war, if they caught you trying to cross the border they put you in jail or made you fight in the army—they did that to some of our neighbors here in Gul Kalay and their families. But we crossed the [Afghanistan-Pakistan] border by foot, taking our carpets and a few things with us. We took the route across the mountains. We moved here before the others came; there were no [refugee] camps then. We never lived in a camp. Later, when the war started, other relatives of ours from Afghanistan also moved to Peshawar and settled in refugee camps in the city or other areas [in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa].

It was hard for me at first; I had four sisters who stayed behind in Nangarhar: I did not want to leave them. Things were never the same for me after I left them. When we settled here it was a scary place to live. This house started off as a tent. All of the houses in the area before us were tents. We didn't get material from the government; we bought it ourselves. Before, however, there were not as many people living here as there are now. There was nothing in this area. It was all *jungal* [wild land]. It stayed like that for a while and we never paid any money to anyone. Slowly, the landlord started to charge us. At

first it was not a lot of money, but as more and more people settled here the prices started to go up.

Afghans and Pakistanis live here now; most are masons and laborers. We slowly built up and transformed the area. There was one mosque before, now there are three, each with its own *imam*. There was never any water. When there was water it quickly got contaminated—there were even cases of cholera. Now we get water through an under-tank in the *bazar*. Some Pakistanis, especially the ones related to the landowner, have direct waterlines in their homes. About six or seven years ago electricity lines were put into the area. Before that we used to take it ourselves, siphoning it from other lines—which we still do because of load shedding. We take the positive and negative terminals and make the earth work like this [gestures with her hands] to get electricity. It is risky though. Someone lost his life doing this in our area a few years ago.

The floods [in 2010] were difficult. Parts of our home were destroyed. If you walk around the area you will see how the homes have been affected.

We've had a good impact on this area. We populated it; we gave it life, making it into a town. There are shops and a market. Before it was a *jangal*, nothing more. We have changed Peshawar. The police, however, have started to come and raid this area and search it. Anytime bombs explode in Peshawar, the police come running to our area. There have been three raids here already. My husband died five years ago, but they hassle my sons near enough every day.<sup>1</sup>

Palwasha is an Afghan Pashtun who is approximately 60 years old and has lived in Peshawar since the mid-1970s. She lives with her five sons, two daughters-in-law, and their children in a part *pakka*, part *katcha* house in Gul Kalay (not its real name), an informal housing settlement situated on the outskirts of Peshawar. In the 1970s, the deteriorating political conditions in her village and district, Nangarhar, and the economic pull of Peshawar meant she, her husband, and his family moved to the city. Five years before our first interview, Palwasha's husband died and she became the matriarchal head of her household, making decisions in the family on issues ranging from marital

disputes to how to approach the landlord for increases to their land allocation—a practice the landlord periodically allowed in the area.

The nature of Palwasha's personality—engaged, social, and responsible—and the relatively better material conditions of her home, meant it was a regular meeting point among local women. She used the possessive “my” and “our” pronouns to signal that Peshawar was *her* city and one that belonged to a collective Afghan and Pakistani set of residents—“*Peshawar zma/muzjh shehr day*” (Peshawar is my/our city). She explained that she, her family, and others like her had given Peshawar “life.” Within Peshawar she referred to her individual and community attachment to her/our neighborhood, “*Da zma/muzjh mohallah day*” (This is my/our neighborhood). However, Palwasha's attachment to her neighborhood and city were being tested by the ways in which Pakistani and Afghan state actors, the UNHCR, and the US and Western European states were pushing an agenda of Afghan refugee repatriation. As I will discuss in the next chapter, repatriation programs were enacted through ubiquitous technologies that advanced the exclusionary tendency of the nation-state undermining Afghan place-making in the city.

By around 2005–2009 refugee camps, schools, and health facilities were closing across the city. Palwasha wondered what this would mean for her and others in her position. The idea that she could be made to leave seemed absurd. She and others like her had built and transformed the city, so they had a right (*haqq*) to live in it. At the same time, Palwasha also explained how she retained an emotional and territorial bond with her ancestral village, kith and kin in Afghanistan. Because she was a first-generation migrant, village life in her country of birth had been a formative part of her selfhood. In Pakistan, she and her family never became Pakistani citizens, which is perhaps why her attachment to her village and an imagined Afghan nation remained important. Palwasha's layered translocal identity connected to local spaces on both sides of the border, however, was in tension with legal status.<sup>2</sup> One of her neighbors, Safdar, another Afghan Pashtun who moved to Peshawar in the mid-1990s, had managed to get a Pakistani national identity card through informal routes. Even as a “paper citizen,” a la Kamal Sadiq,<sup>3</sup> Safdar felt differently to Palwasha, describing himself with greater confidence as “Pakistani.” “We come from Afghanistan,” he said, “but we have all of the documents to say we are Pakistani. We are Pakistani”<sup>4</sup>—an indication of how legality makes a tangible difference in expressions and practices of belonging.

Between 2011 and 2018, I lived and worked in Peshawar in various visiting capacities, including as a researcher, a lecturer at the University of

Peshawar, and visiting family friends. I lived in Hayatabad (its real name), a planned housing area, home to Peshawar's upper and middle classes. I would commute by car, van, or taxi to complete interviews in informal Afghan and Pakistani neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city and refugee camps. In most cases, I was accompanied by a male or female chaperone—usually a friend or member of the family I was living with.

This chapter tells the story of Peshawar's modern geographic expansion with a special focus on the period since the 1970s and the role of Afghan refugees in this process. It shows how Afghans have been central to Peshawar's growth and modernization, first, by contributing to the horizontal spread of the city into rural areas via informal housing settlements (such as in Gul Kalay) and, second, by providing a large part of the labor power to enable these processes. The chapter, then, juxtaposes Gul Kalay with a formal housing area, Hayatabad, to show how inequalities in the city are experienced along class lines. It also shows how residents of Gul Kalay—Afghan and Pakistani—work together to confront and sometimes overcome the obstacles they face in everyday life.

### Expanding Peshawar: 1840s–1960s

In administrative and geographic terms, “Peshawar,” used to mean one of two things: the Peshawar district or valley, which includes both rural and urban areas, or the inner walled city—the latter being an entirely urban settlement also known as *Andrun shehr* (inner city). In this section, I will discuss how the walled city has expanded outward into the rural areas of the Peshawar district/valley, which now means Peshawar is administratively called a “city district.”

Popular representations of Peshawar's urbanity focus on the walled city. Its most “authentic” dwellers are assumed to be the Hindko population, which has lived there since 539 BCE, as well as other regional traders including Pashtuns, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and others.<sup>5</sup> A part of the Silk Road, the city has historically been an essential dry trade port. Peshawar and adjoining rural regions have been key political and economic centers for various rulers and empires: from the Persian Achaemenids; the Greeks, led by Alexander; the Gandahara kingdom; Mughals; the Afghan Durrani state; Sikhs; and the British.<sup>6</sup>

In the more recent precolonial era of the 1600s–1800s, Peshawar was an important political and military base, including for Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh and the Afghan and Mughal kingdoms. Under British colonialism, it was the

base from which to exert colonial and imperial control over the tribal areas and Afghanistan, and to deter Russian imperial influence in the region.<sup>7</sup> In order to exert political control in the broader Peshawar valley, the British colonial state also transformed land ownership in Pashtun rural society. At the time of their takeover, in Pashtun society land distribution was governed under a process known as *wesh*,<sup>8</sup> which was tied to Pashtun social organization and indigenous practices of land use and ownership. The British sought to establish a more fixed political class that would help them secure political control and carry out judicial, administrative, and fiscal functions of state.<sup>9</sup> The earlier Mughal and Kabul kingdoms had already started to increase state centralization and the co-option of senior men, *Khans*, to collect revenue for administrative tasks in return for favor over land and tax breaks. The British offered them full legal ownership of tracts of land for their loyalty. “Big Khans” were positioned at the top of the social order and would become a substantial landed aristocracy and linchpins of British rule. The landed elite also included “small Khans,” who were not employed by the government or directly in its favor—often they sought to win the favor of the British administration, but also challenged its rule at times (the founder of the Khudai Khidmatgar, Bacha Khan, for example, was a small Khan).<sup>10</sup>

In order to exert political and military control over Peshawar and the surrounding areas, the British expanded the city beyond *Andrun shehr*, building a Cantonment, which hosted members of the British colonial army and bureaucracy. They also constructed new irrigation systems across most of the settled areas, the Karachi to Khyber Railway, *Gora Kabristan*,<sup>11</sup> public health facilities such as Lady Reading Hospital and educational institutions such as Edwardes College<sup>12</sup> and Islamia College. The latter was founded in 1913 and designed as a procolonial Muslim educational institute that would offset the anti-colonial influence of Muslim Aligarh University in the Upper Provinces of British India.<sup>13</sup>

After 1947, Peshawar maintained its function as a frontier city and remained the provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (then the NWFP) and the headquarters of the FATA Secretariat. Independence gave birth to new spatial, administrative, social, and demographic conditions in the city and region. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was not divided during partition, but Peshawar and the wider region saw much of its Hindu and Sikh population leave for India. Partition also meant Peshawar gained a 10 percent Muslim refugee population.<sup>14</sup> The administrative boundaries of postcolonial Peshawar steadily grew. In 1953, University Town was established and centered



around the University of Peshawar, which was established in 1950. A leafy suburb, built mainly for members of the bureaucracy, it housed individuals from landed families who sent their children to become a part of the state administration. Nonetheless, much of Peshawar's changes were steady and not rushed—something that would dramatically change by the 1970s.

### **An Afghan City? 1970s–2010s**

Peshawar's most significant postindependence transformation began in the late 1970s as a result of Afghan migrations into the city. Afghan refugees increased the annual rate of population growth in Peshawar from 1.9 percent in the 1960s to 9.2 percent in the 1970s.<sup>15</sup>

The Peshawar valley, which includes today's Nowshera, Charsadda, and Mardan, has always been the economic breadbasket of the region, producing an array of crops (maize, millet, wheat, cotton, and tobacco), fruits, and vegetables, and after independence included key industrial sites (the Khazana Sugar Mill and Hayatabad's industrial zone).<sup>16</sup> Unsurprisingly, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Afghan movements into Peshawar were more concentrated than movements into any other city in the country. By the 1980s, so sizable was the Afghan presence in Peshawar, the government and UNHCR suspended refugee registrations in the Peshawar district to "discourage new arrivals from further concentrating in already heavily overcrowded areas and thereby further aggravating health hazards."<sup>17</sup> These restrictions could never be properly implemented since neither the government nor UNHCR had the staff or funds to enforce such demands. Moreover, large numbers of Afghans who lived outside of Peshawar worked in the city. A construction boom resulting from the new township of Hayatabad, among other projects, demanded unskilled casual labor: Afghans were an important resource in this endeavor.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were well over 300 refugee camps in Pakistan, with 152 to 153 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (excluding FATA), and 60 to 62 refugee camps specifically in Peshawar.<sup>19</sup> Afghans who were a part of Kabul's urbanized elites and the middle classes settled in Peshawar's regulated urban areas, such as University Town and, later, Hayatabad. Many others though, themselves predominantly from rural areas, settled in informal housing areas such as Gul Kalay. Most refugee camps and many informal settlements in the city were situated at the cusps of rural areas of the Peshawar district.<sup>20</sup> In the case of refugee camps, this placement was, in part, a form of state-led social

exclusion. But these settlements were also spontaneous, as people squatted on rural land (government or private) because of their own rural backgrounds (most Afghans moving to Pakistan were from rural areas). It is still common to hear Pakistanis speak about how Afghans had contributed to making land in the district even more fertile and diversifying local crops. Inadvertently, however, these rural-to-urban settlements also led to these areas becoming more densely populated and pushed the boundaries of the city.

The various waves of Afghan migration into the city meant that by the 2010s, over 62 percent of Pakistan's 1.4 million registered Afghans were living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with just under 30 percent of the Afghan population living in the Peshawar city-district.<sup>21</sup> This makes at least one in five of Peshawar's residents Afghan—a 2012 PPVR survey showed Afghans forming 28.65 percent of Peshawar's population, but the actual numbers may be higher.<sup>22</sup> Today the city has an important Afghan presence and cultural imprint which is somewhat distinct from a broader Pashtun identity—in other words, an identity linked to Afghanistan is evident. The city contains Afghan schools and colleges, and, until around 2005, Afghan universities. Many of the current Afghan national cricket team previously lived in Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It also caters to everyday needs: Afghan-run and owned grocery stores that import everyday food and tea from the other side of the border, mechanics, beauticians, wedding shops, wedding halls, matchmakers, restaurants, bakeries, and paint stores. The Afghan migratory impact on the city has played an important role in transforming demographics, landscape, infrastructure, and culture.

In addition to the Afghan migratory impact on the city, Peshawar has been changed by migration of Pakistani citizens from rural areas. Areas dependent on *barani* (rain-fed) crops have long pushed their “surplus sons” to migrate for work<sup>23</sup>—a tradition that accelerated in the postcolonial period due to improved transport links, state-led development projects, a loss of labor opportunities in rural areas, and conflict. Today, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also produces a disproportionate number of Pakistan's migrant workforce—at least 25 percent<sup>24</sup> especially to the Gulf Arab states, as compared to its share of the country's population.<sup>25</sup> Similar to what has happened in cities in the Punjab, since the 1970s, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the former-FATA's Gulf labor migrations have, on return or via remittances contributed to the emergence of new middle and lower middle classes and, linked to this, the urbanization of rural areas or the expansions of towns and cities such as Peshawar.

From the mid-first decade of this century, Peshawar became a refuge point for Pakistanis displaced by military operations in the FATA and Swat. Accurate numbers on how many people were displaced remain unavailable, but conservative figures were in their millions, with most people fleeing to areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Peshawar, refugee camps that were once homes for Afghans became homes for Pakistanis; however, the data that was available suggested that people did not live in IDP camps, instead some 76 percent of IDPs reportedly lived in rented accommodation, 7 percent lived with relatives, 5 percent lived with a host community, while 12 percent lived in informal settlements.<sup>26</sup>

Over a forty-year period, then, Peshawar has undergone a rapid transformation that is the direct result of migration from Afghanistan and within Pakistan to the city.

### **Peshawar as a City-District**

In 2001, Peshawar the district became a “city-district” that is subdivided into four towns/*tehsils*, each with its own set of Union Councils (there are ninety-two Union Councils in Peshawar). In addition to the four towns, urban areas officially include the Cantonment and new housing schemes under the City District Municipal Department (CDMD), such as Hayatabad and Regi Lalmah.<sup>27</sup> Yet there is currently no agreed-upon city boundary. The different towns of the city-district include areas that are administratively classified as rural and urban.<sup>28</sup> The city-district is roughly evenly divided between rural and urban areas, with some 48.5 percent of the total population residing in urban areas.<sup>29</sup>

If it is clear that Peshawar has exceeded the boundaries of its original limits—the walled city—the considerable ambiguity over its outer limits/urban boundaries is indicative of the growth of increasingly population-dense rural regions in the district itself. This ambiguity is telling of how definitions of the “urban” are complex, contested, and changing. Urbanization is not simply about big cities getting bigger. It is also about the growth of increasingly population-dense rural regions—area that are not officially designated as city spaces but nonetheless have many of the trappings of urban life. The United Nations Population Division (UNPD) and UN-Habitat define urban places as those that have a density of at least 400 persons per square kilometer (1,000

persons per square mile), along with a stipulated minimum population. If this is the standard, Mohammad Qadeer says vast swaths of what are administratively categorized as rural areas in Pakistan should be regarded as urban or, in his words, “ruralopolises.”<sup>30</sup>

Peshawar’s expansion has placed greater pressure on the now city-district and its infrastructure. Ad hoc growth means many people live in the city without basic utilities, housing, roads, or sanitation. While there are no detailed studies of Peshawar’s informal settlements, some estimate 60 to 70 percent of the city’s housing is informal.<sup>31</sup> The city’s growth has had negative consequences for the environment. Cheap transport based on diesel and poorly coordinated urban planning make Peshawar one of the most polluted and congested cities in the world.<sup>32</sup> Some 82 percent of Peshawar’s residents are said to have access to clean water, but in practice water and sanitation services do not meet the needs of the growing population.<sup>33</sup> The private sector provides some basic services, including in sanitation and roads, but these are not widely available. Lethal waterborne diseases, deteriorating roads, and homes that collapse are commonplace. There are shortages of hospitals and hospital beds in the city. Periodic spikes in terrorist attacks have exacerbated the strain on hospitals (and city infrastructure). Doctors, nurses, and gurneys in both the city’s government hospitals, Lady Reading Hospital and Khyber Teaching Hospital, complain of the psychological stress they face each time a major bomb blast happens in the area and how their hospitals do not have enough space to deal with the casualties. In the 2010s, these practitioners have also often been on strike for being underpaid and overworked.<sup>34</sup>

There have been several attempts to implement urban master plans for Peshawar, but most of these have been unsuccessful and made redundant as the city has far outgrown their scope.<sup>35</sup> In the 2013 national elections, the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) government was elected in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. This success was repeated across the country in the 2018 national election—albeit with behind-the-scenes military support. In Peshawar, the PTI engaged in a series of “beautification” plans,<sup>36</sup> which involved improving the aesthetics of the city by “landscaping, planting trees, flowers, shrubbery or functional elements such as urban design, streetscape, street furniture, lighting, signage, bus shelters and fountains”; it also involved pushing for what might be described as civic engagement.<sup>37</sup> Inspired, in part, by Karachi’s “I Own Karachi Project,” the PTI seemed to want to make the city’s populations feel pride in and responsibility for their city. In some small corners of Hayatabad, mirroring a phenomenon that exploded on Iranian social

media, some residents enacted a “Wall of Kindness,” where people hang items (clothes, shoes) with the hope that people who need them can take them for free.<sup>38</sup> But aside from the affluent neighborhood of Hayatabad, this ethos did not spread to the rest of the city. Critics view the PTI's achievement as restricted to improve the traffic on a very small section of one main road (University Road) and painting its walls, only to have this all ripped apart by its own construction and development: in 2017, the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA), with sponsorship of the Asian Development Bank, started work on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme. The scheme was designed to improve Peshawar's chaotic urban transport network—which is primarily based on private buses, taxis, and diesel rickshaws. The project has been plagued by delays and controversies. Its main impact to date is to have produced a spike in Peshawar's already bad air quality index.

### **No Homes for the Poor**

As in the rest of Pakistan, in Peshawar there are only few housing schemes for low-income residents and these are often incomplete, caught up in delays, disputes or litigation.<sup>39</sup> Peshawar's housing (under-) development is shaped by a number of factors.

First, the housing schemes that do exist in Peshawar are not inclusive of the urban poor. The 2010–2017 *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Strategic Development Plan* is concerned with affordable housing for government employees, not the poor.<sup>40</sup> Housing schemes managed by the military's commercial wing support military families and the wealthiest residents, not ordinary civilians.<sup>41</sup> The city's most active housing schemes are led by the semiprivate PDA, which is geared toward profit generation. Smaller housing plots of five *marlas* (approximately 126 square meters), for example, in Hayatabad's newest phase, are currently sold at a rate of approximately Rs. 5.2 million. Meanwhile in Regi Town, smaller plots were initially allotted to the poor but many individuals sold these plots on, most likely to housing speculators,<sup>42</sup> in order to meet immediate needs; it can take up to twenty-five years to develop a housing plot into a home.<sup>43</sup>

Second, in Peshawar, as in Karachi, poor communication between different government departments leads to poorly implemented housing schemes, which is even worse for the poor.<sup>44</sup> Regulations such as the 1996 NWFP *Katchi Abadi Act* and the 2001 *National Housing Policy* set out frameworks

that can support the absorption of informal housing areas into the formal sphere of state regulation, but they are poorly understood within provincial urban planning circles. Shelter and housing for displaced persons and refugees requires further coordination with additional government departments, intelligence agencies, and UNHCR, which brings its own challenges, including, as I will discuss, shifts in political strategies and funding issues.

Third, the Pakistani military and political center, and regional Pashtun elites, continue to govern Peshawar as a geopolitical/frontier city, providing a clear example of how global political play out in daily life. This means, as in the colonial era, the state is unwilling to push local landholders to engage in meaningful land reform and redistribution—an unwillingness rooted in colonial-era ways of governing rural society. It also means that government funds are diverted from poverty alleviation or infrastructure projects (such as sanitation or water lines) toward security issues. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's *2010–2017 Strategic Development Plan* was, for example, influenced by security concerns.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, construction of the Ring Road, a thirty-five-kilometer-long road that encircles Peshawar's main urban boundaries, began in the 1990s with the intention of allowing traffic to avoid Peshawar's main arterial road, the historic G.T. road. The Ring Road remained incomplete until 2010 when, in the WOT, the US government decided it was important for NATO trucks' quick and safe access to getting into Afghanistan and invested twenty-five million US dollars for the road to be completed.<sup>46</sup>

Fourth, since around 2000, shifting refugee policies in light of changing geopolitical conditions have led to the closure of many of the city's refugee camps. The state appears to be trying to "purify" the city through the exclusion—or outright removal—of nonnationals. Entire refugee camps were closed down as a part of repatriation drives, including two of the largest camps, Jaloza and Kacha Girhi (the latter was the "go to" camp for refugee photographers such as Steve McCurry or visits by Hollywood stars like Angelina Jolie).<sup>47</sup> While many Afghans have returned to Afghanistan or moved to a third country, many others stayed in Peshawar and moved to other parts of the city. Camp closures, however, were also driven by state-led development and commercial interests. For example, the land where Kacha Girhi once stood became the site of the suburban housing project of Regi Town, which is being managed by the military industrial complex. There is an ongoing dispute over the land between the local landholder and the military—the latter claiming the land on the basis that the East India Company's military forces stayed on it for a few nights in 1857. In another case, in 2017, in the Mansehra district in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, government authorities forced Afghans to vacate two refugee camps for being situated too close to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor route (a collection of infrastructure routes across Pakistani being built in partnership with China).<sup>48</sup> Residents were given the option of voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan or relocation to another refugee camp; but there was no question of the refugee camp remaining in place.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, also in 2017, UNHCR reported that in the Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, “local businesses” demanded refugees’ evictions from refugee camps stating, “the commercial value of the land has increased manifold since the land was provided to Afghan refugees”—although it is likely that the claimants are not only local/small business owners, but small landlords.<sup>50</sup> Despite these pressures, however, many Afghans simply moved elsewhere within the towns and cities of which they are a part, contributing to patterns of urban expansion.

I conducted interviews in Rafi Camp, a refugee camp that sits on the outskirts of Peshawar where a landlord was trying to evict residents so he could start using the land for his own enterprises—he wanted to build houses to rent. The camp had been established in 1981 on private land via an agreement between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CCAR office and the landowner. In the 1980s, as Afghans started to move to Peshawar they were encouraged to settle in the area and register with CCAR and UNHCR. Today, the camp is home to second and third generation Afghans. However, in 2002 the landlord began disputing the terms of the lease, demanding the land back from CCAR and the residents. In 2002, Rasul Baksh, the head teacher of the camp’s sole primary school and a local community organizer, worked with other residents, and some local Pakistani NGO workers to take the landlord to court and prove their right to remain in the area.<sup>51</sup> The court ruled in their favor. Rasul Baksh held onto the judicial rulings and their photocopies, keeping them in the pocket of his *shalwar kamiz* every day. He shared them with me—and any others he thought might be able to alleviate the situation of the camp. But during 2011 to 2013, the landlord started to file police complaints about the residents of the area and threatened his own legal action, accusing residents of being squatters. The landlord also periodically demolished parts of the camp, including the primary school’s boundary and classroom walls. I had been doing weekly interviews in the area, when, one day, I entered the school and the grade one classroom had been bulldozed down. The blackboard, chalk, books, desks, and chairs were among the rubble, which teachers were picking through to salvage whatever they could. Rasul Baksh explained, “They turned up in the early morning to break down the walls. The landlord

is a big man. He has connections. His people came with their tools to break down the walls and we had to stand together to fight them off. But we do not know how long they will let us stay here for. Even though we have the documents and permission to be here, he says he owns this land and that we have to leave.”<sup>52</sup> In response to the eviction threat, residents came up with strategies to try to alleviate their position. They organized patrols to watch out for the landlord and his hired help. They lobbied CCAR, UNHCR, and even the police. Yet their position in the area remained tenuous; many feared eviction was only around the corner.

### Comparing Hayatabad and Gul Kalay

#### Hayatabad

During my fieldwork, I worked in Gul Kalay, an informal housing settlement, while living in Hayatabad, a regulated area, inadvertently allowing me to compare their profoundly different pathways of development and their corresponding social outcomes. Both areas emerged in the 1970s. Both are home to Afghans and Pakistanis. Both lie on the outskirts of what were, until the 1970s, considered main parts of the city (*Andrun shehr*, the Cantonment, and University Town). Gul Kalay emerged from a village situated in Peshawar district while Hayatabad, also a part of Peshawar district, directly borders the Khyber district (once in the FATA). Despite these similarities, Hayatabad's position on the edges of the city is different from that of Gul Kalay. Hayatabad is a formally regulated area. Gul Kalay is officially a village, but also contains densely populated housing settlements that do not exist in law.

Hayatabad, named after Hayat Sherpao, a former governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and member of the PPP, is a meticulously government and privately planned suburban residential and part-industrial area. I was told the layout of Hayatabad was, in part, inspired by the planned city of Islamabad, designed in the 1950s by Greek architect, Constantinos A. Doxiadis and based on a grid system<sup>53</sup>—apparently, a local architect from Lucky Marwat, employed in the PDA, was responsible for Hayatabad's planning. Residents of Hayatabad proudly proclaim that Hayatabad looks as if it could be a part of Islamabad. Over the years, it has been developed in seven planned “Phases” (Phases 1 to 7), each of which is further divided into sectors. Each phase is accompanied by public parks, a market, mosques, and private schools. Hayatabad has planned roads,



monuments dedicated to the military and fallen soldiers, modern mosques, including one funded and designed by Saudi Arabia, Masjid-e-Zarghoni in Phase 2. Most recently, in 2016, to secure the elite and middle-class vote, the PTI provincial government built an overpass, Bab-e-Peshawar, costing over 1.77 billion rupees, which was designed to reduce travel time from Hayatabad to University Town. But since traffic has been moving extra slow because of the BRT construction, the overpass has not really done what was promised. In fact, the bridge has ended up being more of a leisure spot for local residents, where young men walk or drive up to the top tier to take selfies, listen to music, eat, and smoke against the backdrop of the city.<sup>54</sup>

The original blueprints for Hayatabad include specific details for house structures, story levels, the type of water tank permissible, utility lines, and the like.<sup>55</sup> Today, homes have direct access to piped water, gas, and electricity. Sewage lines connect to the city's sewers for water treatment. In the 1970s, the city and region's existing elites and newly emerging middle classes—doctors, surgeons, business people, and university chancellors—were encouraged to buy cheap housing plots and develop homes in accordance with the clearly set-out building laws and regulations. (The home where I lived in Hayatabad was one of the first of three houses to be built in Phase 1.) Although Afghans are not permitted to buy immovable property in Pakistan, Hayatabad has a number of Afghan-owned homes (the exact number is unknown), bought via informal connections in the bureaucracy or military by individuals who managed to acquire “paper citizenship,” in the form of having a Pakistani national identity card (therefore making them Pakistani). Suffice it to say, there are several schools and colleges in the area that are based on an Afghan national syllabus with teaching in Dari and Pashto (rather than English and Urdu) and approved by the Afghan embassy in Peshawar and its education department.<sup>56</sup> And until around 2005, Hayatabad was also home to the Afghan universities, Aryana University and Dawat-ul-Jihad in Hayatabad. The latter was run by Gulbudin Hekmatyar, and approved by the government of Pakistan.

Hayatabad is home to some lower-income Afghans and Pakistanis, including factory workers employed in the township's industrial areas, drivers, and domestic laborers. During my fieldwork, it also became home to displaced persons from the former FATA who moved into rented accommodation, especially in the newest phases (six and seven). Most of these families and individuals rented upper or lower portions of houses. Overall, however, the area is home to an urbanized/urbanizing mix of Afghans and Pakistanis who have “the most secure livelihoods [in Peshawar], relying on salaried jobs,

skilled professions (such as teaching and engineering) or larger businesses—factory workers, for example, [who] are much more secure in their jobs than daily wage labourers.”<sup>57</sup>

It is perhaps ironic that the construction of Hayatabad, considered the jewel of Peshawar’s urban planning, used the cheap and informal labor of the city’s large Afghan population. They were paid around Rs. 25 to Rs. 40 per day (the standard at the time).<sup>58</sup> Contractors would choose laborers in the morning from a small number of recognized hiring points in the city where Afghans living in refugee camps and informal housing areas would go and wait to get selected for work. In the 1970s and 1980s, early residents of Hayatabad (situated as it was on the outskirts of the city) told me that you could see University Town as a speck in the distance. A little closer, yet still on the outskirts, you could see the massive refugee camp of Kacha Girhi, which, at its peak, was one of Pakistan’s largest. Afghans living in Kacha Girhi and nearby areas would walk some four to six kilometers each way every day to work as construction laborers in Hayatabad. I interviewed Ibrahim Hafiz, who lived in an informal housing settlement, not too far from where Kacha Girhi used to be.<sup>59</sup> Ibrahim Hafiz and his family moved to Peshawar in 1983. His home, like Palwasha’s in Gul Kalay, was part *katcha*, part *pakka*. After a few hours of interviews, he and I stood outside his home observing the changing landscape and expansion of the city. Hayatabad’s lights could be seen in the distance. He said, “We moved to Pakistan in the 1980s. When we were first here, you see Hayatabad in front of us now [points to Hayatabad], well that was not there. Hayatabad was built on the sweat and labor of Afghans.” Ibrahim Hafiz claimed Peshawar as his own on the grounds that he had built it. A Pakistani resident of Hayatabad’s earliest homes concurred: “So much of this [Hayatabad] was built by Afghan laborers from the camps. . . . So much of it. They were the ones working hard, making this city what it is today.”<sup>60</sup>

#### Gul Kalay

Unlike Hayatabad, the homes of Gul Kalay do not appear on government-issued maps—although Google Maps satellite imagery does pick up the settlement. There are no official blueprints. There are no official street names and no house numbers. Instead, residents construct homes using basic materials that they buy or siphon off in small quantities from other places (out of use railway lines, main roads, and public works). Residents and the landlord navigate

the area using local knowledge and landmarks: the little mosque (*lazj jamat*), the *tandoor*, the water/pond, or the names of key elders in the area, including Palwasha (*da Palwasha kor*)—this area is not “seen by the state,”<sup>61</sup> not because the state withdraws its responsibility to the inhabitants, but because it governs the poor—and the landholder—in a different way. Unlike Hayatabad, there are no monuments, overpasses, or grand ornate mosques in and around this area. Instead, the writ of the landlord holds weight, while state interventions to improve the lives of the poor have little impact.

If Hayatabad tells a story of successive waves of international, regional, and local migrations, so too does Gul Kalay. The difference, however, is Gul Kalay's residents represent the poorest segments of each of these migration movements. Across Peshawar, there is little variety in the livelihood options of the urban poor, be they Afghan refugees, IDPs, or longer-term residents: most are engaged in day labor, which includes construction and agriculture.<sup>62</sup> In addition, disproportionate numbers of Afghans work in bonded labor in brick kilns.<sup>63</sup> In Gul Kalay, additional occupations include street hawking, driving, and domestic labor. A minority of those who are better off are traders, and smugglers.

Palwasha's sons all had basic primary school education; some had attended secondary school, but others had to drop out because, in her words, “we had no money, we needed them to earn for us.”<sup>64</sup> Her sons have different jobs: one is a stone mason, another sells *channe* (chickpeas) from a wooden street cart to a local school, and another is a day laborer, working in Afghanistan and Pakistan, moving across the border in search of work—an increasingly common practice, even among Pakistani laborers. Meanwhile, her daughters-in-law are responsible for the domestic duties and childcare that sustain the household. A few minutes away from Palwasha is Yasir, a thirty-five-year-old Pakistani Pashtun mechanic from Lakki Marwat who lives with his wife and two children; Yasir's brother and family live next door. Yasir has better work than most people in the area, and thus a better equipped home—an indication of which was a refrigerator. He would tell me he was aware of differences of nationality and tribe in the area, but these were secondary concerns to actually getting access to basic resources in the area, such as electricity, sanitation, and water. He said, “Our people are different [from Lakki Marwat], our families, our way of speaking Pashto, we are Pakistani . . . but here, people do not care about this. We care about making our basic rights as humans.”<sup>65</sup>

Safdar, the Afghan-Pakistani mentioned at the start of the chapter, lives in the same row of houses. Next to Yasir and Safdar, lived Wasif, a forty-year-old

originally from Mohmand, who worked in Kuwait as a driver for an Arab family, periodically returning to Peshawar. Wasif's wife would stay in Gul Kalay with her mother-in-law for months at a time when Wasif was in Kuwait. On the other side of Palwasha's house, in the areas closer to the Ring Road, lived Shamsa, a twenty-nine-year-old Afghan Pashtun with her two children, mother-in-law, and (mostly) absent husband; she moved to the area soon after 2000. She explained that her husband, Farid, "sometimes gets work and earns Rs. 250 in a day. But he'll be sure to spend Rs. 200 on *hashish*."<sup>66</sup> Unable to rely on his earnings, she and her children sold potatoes in small markets each day. Their family's daily income ranged from nothing to approximately Rs. 250 at best. Most days she, her children, and her mother-in-law walked several hours to get free meals at a *langar*<sup>67</sup> in the *Ghanta Ghar* (clock tower) in the city center. In another home lives Kamaluddin, who is sixty-five years old, with his wife Jamila and five children.<sup>68</sup> Kamaluddin only has the use of one arm (he lost one to an infection) and has no support from the state or refugee regime. Work is hard for him to come by, but "I take what I get," he said.

Nowroz, an Afghan Pashtun and a sixty-year-old day laborer who lived with his wife and six children—five other children of theirs were married and living elsewhere—also lived nearby. Nowroz moved to Gul Kalay sometime in 1980–1981 (he cannot remember the exact date). It was one of the first areas he settled in after leaving Nangarhar after crossing over from the FATA to Peshawar. In between, he and his family moved around the city. They lived in various informal housing areas in Peshawar, Kacha Girhi refugee camp, and shared a house in University Town. Eventually, however, Nowroz moved back to Gul Kalay: he could not afford the rents in University Town, which he said "were always a little higher for Afghans."<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, he and his family were overwhelmed by the size and overcrowding of the refugee camp in Kacha Girhi. His wife, Yumna, explained how the governance of Afghans as a "sea of humanity" failed to account for the complexities of their lives and their needs.<sup>70</sup> She said, "It was too big with too many strangers. The toilets were so dirty. Our feet got so dirty. We did not know who was coming and going. I never felt comfortable in such a big space. I always wanted to be in a smaller place."<sup>71</sup>

At the time of my fieldwork, Nowroz said he could not afford the costs of basic health care—both in terms of time and money—and could not send his children to school. Rather he, like Palwasha and Shamsa, needed his children, to work. His daughters and wife, Yumna, "washed clothes in people's homes in University Town"—others in the area traveled to Hayatabad. The *katcha*

walls within the inner boundary of Nowroz's home were broken, the toilet had no roof, and after a series of heavy rains mud and local rubbish—plastic bottles and bags, tin cans, and food waste—would collect outside in the alleyway, making it hard for him and his family to get in and out of the house. When I was there, his children were leaping over the rubbish to get in and out of the house. Nowroz was clear that there had been inadequate support for him and his family during his time in Peshawar: the humanitarian and refugee aid regime, government officials, and mujahidin parties had not provided anything remotely sufficient for them. He said, "What help do we get from them? Words. Words mean nothing. We expect nothing from them."<sup>72</sup> At the time of my research in the area, the UNHCR's work was limited to occasional surveys—some of which I observed on the side of implementing partners of the UNHCR—identity card registration, and the attestation of documents (for example, school certificates). Nowroz explained his identity is not solely tied to a nationality, but to his occupation and the structural circumstances of poverty he faced. Attributing his poverty not to himself (he did not call himself a "poor man"), but the poverty he faced. Nowroz explained:

I was a laborer then and I am a laborer now. I was poor then and I am poor now. This is poverty . . . quite simply, we rely upon Allah. I still work as a daily laborer. The conditions then and now were slightly different—now things are so much more expensive. Then (in the 1980s) I would earn Rs. 25–30 on a daily basis, but things like *ghi* [clarified butter] were cheaper and we could get by on our income easily for a long time. Now I earn Rs. 200–250. But things are so expensive now. We can barely afford most of the basic food we need: tomatoes, vegetables, oil.<sup>73</sup>

In Pakistan, the emergent middle class, which includes residents of Hayatabad, exert what Ayyaz Mallick calls a "claim over urbanity, nation, and citizenship,"<sup>74</sup> often at the expense of the poorest residents. This exclusionary function is central to understanding how urban space is managed, pushing the poor to the boundaries of the city or its inner corners. Yet for Nowroz and the others of the Gul Kalay, this marginalization is not silently accepted or internalized as something of their own making. As a result they also do not simply look to the state or local landlord to alleviate their circumstances; instead they work collectively within the area—as they must—to improve their everyday lives.

### The Landlord and Neighborhood Solidarities

The original village of Gul Kalay was once home only to the legal owner of the land on which it lies, Mustafa Jamal and his family. Part of the original home still stands, but has since been significantly upgraded and improved. The land lies adjacent to the heavily congested Ring Road, the thirty-five-kilometer-long road that encircles Peshawar's urban boundary. Mustafa Jamal's home is the farthest away from the congestion of Ring Road traffic. Well structured, it is made of good quality concrete, spacious, and surrounded by green, fertile land. The windows are protected with iron bars. The gate, painted green and festooned with engravings, is ornate and imposing. He has several televisions, bathrooms, refrigerators, and other amenities. Official electricity, gas, and waterlines go directly to his house and the houses closest to his—even if his electricity supply is subject to the same cuts that result from load shedding across the country. The houses closest to Mustafa Jamal are owned by other members of his family. These are made from good quality building materials procured from local building contractors and hardware suppliers. Small- to medium-sized cars (a white Suzuki Alto, a black Honda Civic, and a motor-bike) are parked outside the iron gates of these homes.

Closer to the Ring Road, most of the area's residents (Afghan and Pakistani) live in conditions that are rather different. Among these houses, those closest to the original village were of better quality and are populated by higher-earning families. The two Pakistani families I mentioned earlier lived in this part of the settlement, alongside the Afghan Pakistani smuggler living here. Homes closest to the Ring Road were populated by the poorest members of Gul Kalay; most of these residents were Afghan (Palwasha, Shamsa, Kamaluddin, and Nowroz). This poorer area of Gul Kalay, and in effect the entry point to the neighborhood, was cordoned off from the Ring Road by a large brick boundary wall some two-and-a-half meters high. Rent was collected by a representative, a resident, from each of the dozen or so houses in a given portion of Gul Kalay; the money was then given to one of the two trusted representatives of the landholder, Nadim or Wajid, both Pakistani Pashtun men in their early thirties and relatives of Mustafa Jamal who lived in the area. Palwasha explained, "When we first settled on this land, we did not know whose it was. We just settled here. But then we found out it belonged to Mustafa Jamal, so we had to get his permission to continue living here. Later we started to pay him rent. Eventually, he started to get bolder, charging us more and more."<sup>75</sup> Gradually, as the area became more populated,

by the 1990s, Mustafa Jamal collected rent from all residents through men like Nadim or Wajid.

When I was working in the area, Mustafa Jamal was difficult to get hold of. He was often checking on properties he owned in the city, visiting relatives, or traveling to other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Islamabad where he also had a home. At other times, he was simply uninterested and unwilling to interact with the local residents or those carrying out surveys in the area, which included researchers like me, but also government workers, NGO surveyors, and health workers administering vaccines. Gul Kalay is known to governing bodies (state and international aid agencies). It is neither a cordoned-off minifiedom nor an autonomous informal area. Yet Mustafa Jamal wanted to limit interactions with officials and outsiders. "It is my land and what happens here is my business," he told me.<sup>76</sup> Yet he would delegate interactions with officials to his two middlemen, Nadim and Wajid—an indication of a certain acknowledgment of the importance of state matters in his capacity to exert power in the area.<sup>77</sup> These middlemen would also meet with representatives of the settlement to resolve issues around water, sanitation, house construction and maintenance, the state of alleyways, access to utilities, and to collect rent.

Mustafa Jamal insisted that he was not charging residents rent other than a nominal fee. When I finally managed to meet for an interview with him (in which we were standing, because he wanted it to be over with, quickly), he explained, "I have practically given away the land. What can they [the residents] do; the poor need a place to live, so we give them that place here." Mustafa Jamal portrayed his actions as charitable, his motivation as benevolent paternalism. He explained he was initially driven by the "exceptional time of the *jihad* [the Soviet-Afghan war]" and then later "to help the poor." "This is my duty," he said using the word "*farz*" to denote a religious obligation. Yet, on other occasions, when I met him again, Mustafa Jamal let slip a different reality when I pressed him. "Look, they pay me money for living on my land. And if they cannot pay, they can leave. Go back to Afghanistan, if they want."

Mustafa Jamal and other landholders along the rural-to-urban interface rent land to low-income families as a strategy to generate extra income and maintain their class position. In rural Pashtun societies, as is the case elsewhere, social, cultural, political, and economic capital and constructions of identity are tied to attachments to ancestral lands. Renting or selling one's land has significant social connotations. Yet the diversification of the occupations of small- and medium-sized landholding families, including the entry of the male workforce into government services, the armed forces, and

migration to other urban centers (particularly Karachi and Islamabad) and abroad has produced a greater willingness to use their land for rent-seeking, as they adapt their patterns of consumption to those which resemble the lifestyles of an upwardly mobile urbanizing upper middle/middle class.<sup>78</sup>

Market forces are no doubt in play, with rising demand for liquidity among the new lower-middle-income groups pushing landlords to rent out or sell their land. Some of these new classes are the result of migration circuits in bigger cities or the Gulf Arab states. Here people have accumulated enough capital to either buy a plot of land and build their own homes or even invest in small- to medium-sized enterprises—shops, restaurants, or other services. In other cases, people from rural areas rent property in the city to be closer to work and opportunities for education. The result is growing and unregulated urbanization of rural land in Peshawar that provides access to housing and utilities to the city's poor, but is also riddled with difficulties for them.

In Gul Kalay, the poorest houses with the cheapest rents were clustered together. The houses had outer boundaries made of mud walls, maintained by cow dung, a practice common in South Asia. The inner parts of the house were built out of a mixture of mud and brick. Rows of houses were densely packed, with outer boundary walls touching each other. Stray dogs roam the alleyways, as is the norm in urban Pakistan. Wooden doors or a piece of cloth served as entrances to homes. Blue tarpaulin sheets and groundsheets brought along from previous tenancies in refugee camps acted as walls to shelter some homes from the wind, rain, and sun. Some residents who lived in the area longer, including Palwasha's sons, negotiated new and better plots of land from Mustafa Jamal. They had also saved enough money to buy better building materials from the local middleman, including bricks to build outer boundary walls and the house structure itself.

Electricity lines had been present for about seven years. Using an informal contact in the government public works company, the Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO), Nadim and Wajid secured a line to the area. Residents were required to pay the commission for the electricity to PESCO, while Nadim and Wajid also took a cut of the money. However, the electricity supply was inconsistent. In response, residents siphoned electricity from another line on the nearby main road. Electricity wires hung loosely overhead, and several residents had been electrocuted. Most survived, except one, as Palwasha told me in the opening quote of this chapter. Additionally, when I started to conduct interviews in the area, it was the peak of winter. Temperatures were between five and eleven degrees centigrade during the



day. Yet not everyone had access to electric or gas heaters (via direct gas lines) or a gas cylinder. Instead, women and children collected firewood to burn fires for cooking and warming their homes.

The sanitation system in Gul Kalay also developed in piecemeal ways through self-construction by residents. As Pakistan's cities spill into the countryside, "open drains and ponds of sewage weave around [informal] homes."<sup>79</sup> One of the biggest problems in unplanned informal settlements is that they cannot obtain bulk sewage disposal systems because this requires huge financial outlays and complicated infrastructural arrangements.<sup>80</sup> In early UNHCR documents, field staff notes from initial surveys indicated that 43 percent of people used an open space close to their homes to relieve themselves, 41 percent went to the toilet in the fields, while 6 percent used latrines.<sup>81</sup> Today, experts and policy makers estimate that some 45 to 46 percent of households in urban areas are connected to an underground sewerage system.<sup>82</sup> Some 39 percent of households dispose of excrement in open drains.<sup>83</sup> In Peshawar, the underground sewage system is outdated and ineffective. Four sewage treatment plants developed in 1993 are supposed to cover the city's needs. However, only one of those treatment plants is functional; the other three have been abandoned.<sup>84</sup> The rapid rate of Peshawar's urbanization means sewage lines and treatment plans have not been expanded or maintained to keep pace with the growing population. Instead, ad hoc arrangements have been made to connect them to the nearest natural drains or water bodies. In informal housing areas, such as Gul Kalay, underground sewers or open drains develop in the absence of a planned disposal system, and waste is disposed into the soil.

As I walked around the poorer homes of the area, different drainage systems were in place. Each home started off having a toilet with sewage going directly into the ground. Some homes still had a toilet where waste collects in the ground and goes directly into the soil, but most were now connected to open drains that lead waste away from the home. Palwasha's sons were often active in digging drains for the area. They did so for their own home and for their neighbors and friends. They explained, "We take care of this area together. We all know each other, our children go to school together, and our mothers are friends. If we do not do this then who will?"<sup>85</sup>

Frequent rainfall and recent floods in Peshawar, however, meant that sewage regularly accumulated in the muddy alleyways, spilling out of the drains, which fall apart and need frequent maintenance. Across the city, as sewage flows into the natural drainage system and water bodies or into depressions, Peshawar's once famously clean rivers and ground water have become heavily

polluted.<sup>86</sup> In Gul Kalay, akin to Camp-e-Marwarid (Chapter 2), there is also a pond situated closest to the poorest households. Given that Peshawar lies in a physically depressed area this is not unusual, but this means that during the rainy season there is a lot of standing water, in particular in informal and unplanned areas, which attracts mosquitoes and disease.<sup>87</sup> Open sewage and the lack of appropriate drainage systems means that much of this standing water is polluted.<sup>88</sup> In Gul Kalay the pond acts as an incubator for water-borne illnesses that are common in the area, including cholera.

Residents also had no water line in the area. They repeatedly organized to lobby the landholder via his middlemen, but also relied on the altruism of the local mosque. In Peshawar all ninety-two Union Councils reportedly have piped water systems, mostly drawing on ground water, supplied through taps. In reality, however, water is often provided by people organizing contracts with commercial actors or siphoning water from other areas. The government rarely extends water service to new areas. The public water system was initially designed for only five thousand people.<sup>89</sup> Water is also contaminated by sewage, toxic industrial waste, and domestic waste. Today, direct waterlines are uncommon compared to tube wells. A 2008 report indicates that some two million people in Peshawar drink contaminated water.<sup>90</sup> A handful of the best houses in Gul Kalay have installed an under-tank system (those of the landlord and his surrounding family). The poorest households, such as those of Nowroz, Shamsa, and Palwasha, have neither under-tanks nor waterlines. Instead, they purchase or siphon off water from the *bazar* or local mosque.

I interviewed Asfandiyar, a fifty-one-year-old Afghan shopkeeper, who has lived in Gul Kalay since 1995, with his five sons.<sup>91</sup> Asfandiyar lives in the poorer section of Gul Kalay, close to Shamsa. His eldest son is 26 years old and the youngest is 13 years old; some were born in Jalalabad and the others in Peshawar. He moved to Peshawar following his parents. After the Taliban gained power, he was worried that his family, known to have PDPA sympathies, might fall victim to their violence. His father, a small shopkeeper, used his savings to help his sons survive in the first few years of their lives in Peshawar. But the money ran out within a few years and a spiral of downward social mobility set in fast. Asfandiyar worked as a street hawker selling *jalebi* (a sweetmeat) to Afghans in Kacha Girhi refugee camp. Initially, he earned Rs. 40 a day, which rose to Rs. 60 per day. When I was interviewing him, he had no income, but was selling *papar* (a savory snack) to school children to make some extra money. He relied on his sons to work, and they pooled



Figure 2. Alleyway leading to the homes of residents of Gul Kalay, Peshawar, including Nowroz.

their resources to keep the family fed, clothed, and educated. One of his sons worked a street cart, selling food, the others were teaching and studying in the city. The twenty-two-year-old son, Ilyas, was teaching English at a private institute in the city, and kept a whiteboard in the house where he made his younger brothers practice their English. The family was cricket-obsessed

(perhaps the best marker of social integration in Peshawar), so when I first entered the house, the whiteboard had, “He bowled beautifully” written on it, referring to Pakistani cricketer Shahid Afridi.<sup>92</sup> The brothers had pooled enough money to buy a secondhand computer which sat on a brown wooden desk; the sole electric/gas heater in the house stood beneath it. Power cuts were so frequent, however, that it was seldom in use.

As a result of the lack of safe drinking water, Asfandiyar and his sons tried to find other solutions for their home and the neighborhood. Asfandiyar said:

In all of the houses around here we do not have any access to water. But the imam at the mosque said we could take the water ourselves from the mosque. We do not have to pay him anything for this. Sometimes however we help out and maintain the area for him and the mosque and the area around it, we will clean and rebuild the walls if needed. So, we go with our cartons and fill up the water there every day. You see other people from the area doing the same. We try to share water with each other here. My sons check who needs water, if someone needs any help. They are good like this.<sup>93</sup>

For Asfandiyar, his sons, and his neighbors, altruism, neighborhood solidarity, and shared material interests motivate individuals to work together to secure access to the most basic necessity: water. “It is just a matter of humanity,” he said. The imam concurred. He explained, “People here struggle. Food is expensive, the rents are going up, and no one earns enough in the day. So they take the water from the mosque, what else can they do?” It is this same logic that pushes residents to work together to build alleyways, and access to water, electricity, and sanitation systems in the area. It also applies when local residents work together to navigate the arrests that Afghan males, usually teenagers and young men, often face. A shared neighborhood sentiment weaves together the different residents, especially those in the poorest parts of the area. Here, residents act and feel connected to each other and do so in ways that cut across distinctions in legal, residential status. Formal citizenship still matters. But the proximity and awareness of other similar neighborhoods; connectedness to each other by roads and bus lines, and the surrounding Ring Road; and a consciousness of their role in building the city allows residents to express a belonging and claim to Peshawar and its resources from below, as their own.

### Maintaining the Status Quo and Vulnerable Ecologies

In Gul Kalay and across Peshawar, the capacity for “hard work” by residents was referred to by NGO workers and government officials when describing how they viewed residents living in the area. Yet this “hard work” also upheld a status quo, and withdrew responsibility from the state and international refugee regime for these populations. These sentiments must be seen within the context of the state's unwillingness to challenge the social hierarchy that places the landowner in total dominance over the populations in this frontier district.

Unlike the contested and ambiguous nature of land in the examples I presented from Karachi (Camp-e-Marwarid and Ishtiaq Goth), as mentioned earlier in the chapter, the colonial and postcolonial state (government and military administrations) do not attempt to intervene in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa society, especially in comparison to the Punjab and Sindh: land tenure is, on the whole, relatively stable for landlords in the Peshawar valley. There are cases in which the state enters into disputes with landlords. There are private disputes over land. There are also informal housing settlements built on public land, such as on the Pakistan Railway Lines in University Town—also known as the Railway Colonies/Board. (In the case of Board, legal rulings called for the housing area to be regulated and absorbed into state administration.) In 2017 to 2018, the local government engaged in a series of anti-encroachment drives to demolish shops and housing on government land, including outside *Ghanta Ghar*, *Spin Jamat*, and other parts of the city. Yet in contrast with Karachi, where informal settlements (Camp-e-Marwarid and Ishtiaq Goth), are contested and where it is common for police officials to demand *bhatta* (extortion) from residents, by and large, the state tends only to directly intervene in neighborhoods such as Gul Kalay when it comes to security issues: when they are searching for a potential terrorist, or if someone in the area has been accused of a crime. Once, for example, a resident of Gul Kalay jumped over the wall as the police came looking for him; he later admitted that he had smuggled some goods across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. On three different occasions within the months that I was working in the area, after a major bomb blast took place in the city, the police and Rangers searched residents' homes for weapons—except the landholder and his relative. The police, I was told, suspected that some of the individuals involved in the bombings were hiding in Gul Kalay and arrested a number of men in the area, all the while asking for their identity cards, to prove if they

were Afghan, Pakistani, or FATA Pashtuns. Zalan said, “They were searching for weapons, so they said. Two of my brothers were arrested and imprisoned for fifteen days. We were told that we had to pay them Rs. 5000. They took their mobile phones from them and then took them to the border. They left them there. But they came straight back.”<sup>94</sup> I will discuss the issue of deportations of Afghans in the next chapter. For now, however, it is important to note here that residents said that they felt they were targeted arbitrarily because of the high proportion of Afghans living in the area, because the area was home to the poor, and because the state was concerned about its own geopolitical interests.

In Peshawar, the city’s *longue durée* as a “frontier city” means the state is willing to turn a blind eye to the proliferation of informal housing settlements, but the state, or the particular branch of it that residents encounter, is strong on issues of state security. Yet in both Karachi and Peshawar, the state is effectively relying on the informal sphere for managing populations it does not want to directly govern—it is just that the power brokers are different in each setting because of historical differences in land ownership and governance practices. Nonetheless, the result is comparable: less regulation, security, and safety for the people who must use these channels.

In Gul Kalay, residents live in cheap homes which have transformed the city, but their solutions are hazardous, life-threatening, and ecologically unsustainable. Housing and building laws are meant to protect and enhance the lives of residents. For example, the *Building Control Law* sets out minimum criteria, “such as proper plotting, roads, mosques, playgrounds, commercial areas and other facilities.”<sup>95</sup> These regulations, however, are not implemented in areas such as Gul Kalay. Instead, their implementation is reserved for areas such as Hayatabad. In Gul Kalay, the housing structures, utilities, and sanitation system do not meet most (if any) legal requirements as outlined in building and housing laws.<sup>96</sup> The result is massive challenges for residents and the surrounding ecological systems.

Nothing captures the hazards of densely populated, poorly managed urban housing and infrastructure quite like the scale of devastation after environmental disasters and hazards. In Gul Kalay and other informal areas in the city, conducting interviews just after a flash flooding was invariably accompanied by familiar sights: young boys and girls helping their fathers, uncles, and neighbors fix a wall, the drain, or a toilet; people clearing debris from fallen structures; residents diligently sweeping away the water with

low-technology tools. After the 2010 floods, from 28 July 2010 to 3 August 2010, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province received 3,462 millimeters of rain. This is compared to an annual rainfall total of 962 mm.<sup>97</sup> Estimates state that over 237,068 individuals and 37,876 households were displaced in the Peshawar district alone.<sup>98</sup> Additional figures add that 5,312 homes were destroyed and 15,202 damaged.<sup>99</sup> As I walked in and around Gul Kalay in the start of 2011, a few months after the 2010 floods, the impacts of the floods were stark. Each time I returned to the area to do follow-up interviews, damage to homes from flash flooding had occurred and was causing a backlog of sewage to spill out into the streets. Flash flooding in Peshawar frequently claims the lives of the urban poor, particularly in informal homes on the rural-to-urban interface.<sup>100</sup> During my fieldwork, Gul Kalay also had a number of cases of cholera, tuberculosis, individuals being electrified by electricity lines, and houses that literally fell apart when it rained. Sewage often overflows in the area and was also contributing to growing health concerns in the city.

### **The City We Made**

Afghans from Peshawar claim the city as their own. But the bases for these claims are not ethnonationalisms that shape popular discourse in Afghanistan or the discussions in living rooms of middle-class Pashtun nationalists. Rather, for the people I worked with, the claim to Peshawar was based on their having built the city with their own hands. This was an articulation of rights and a demand for their labor to be recognized. In Gul Kalay, Afghan residents may not feel Pakistani, but they certainly feel a Peshawari identity. This was an urban citizenship and identity that residents claim because of the nature of the city and their labor within it. For the people they live alongside, including Pakistanis, there is a mutual recognition of their shared efforts in transforming the city and improving their lives. Over the past forty years, Peshawar has changed significantly in size, demography, and urbanization. In government policy circles, it is the upper- and middle-class housing scheme of Hayatabad that is lauded as a success story. But as this chapter shows, Peshawar's growth is found more significantly in the informal housing area and refugee camps and often it is people living in these areas that contribute toward the labor of developing and sustaining areas such as Hayatabad. The residents of Gul Kalay understand their role and position in the urban order.



They also understand their actions of redistribution as humanizing and as actions based on necessity. They juxtapose their efforts with the actions of official actors or landowners, who are passing responsibility or profiteering. They recognize the vulnerability of their lives: through flooding, homes falling apart, or disease. This, then, is a precarious urban citizenship, which is not idealized as an alternative or better citizenship, but as one that emerges as it must.



# PART III



## Pushing Out Afghans



## CHAPTER 5

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### Surveillance, Documents, and Repatriation

I carry newspaper clippings with me that say I am allowed to stay in the country. I carry my ID card. I carry the government letters. I carry everything I can, so that each time I am asked for a bribe, or arrested, I can at least try . . . try to make them understand that I am from here.

—Interview with Waliullah, Peshawar, 2017

They [the police] call me a muhajir. I tell them I am not a muhajir. I was born here. My father was a muhajir. He moved here. I didn't.

—Interview with Aziz, Peshawar, 2017

Nowroz placed the documents in front of me. We were mapping the trajectory of his changing legal, residential, and citizenship status through identity (ID) documents. Alongside jewelry, money, medical reports, and other valuable items, the documents had been carefully stored in the family's leather trunk. There was an Afghan *tazkira* (national identity document); an Afghan identity card; a well-worn government of Pakistan refugee passbook; a mujahidin card, issued by the Hezb-e-Islami; and UNICEF vaccine papers for his children. From his *shalwar kamiz* pocket he pulled out his latest card, a recent addition to this personal archive: an Afghan Citizen Proof of Registration (POR) card, issued by the government of Pakistan. This one needed to be on hand at all times. I was sitting with Nowroz in his home in Gul Kalay (Chapter 4) in Peshawar. Each of his documents offered forms of legal recognition by a state or the international refugee regime; some enabled access to basic goods, services, and rights. The most recent document, the POR card, also commonly called

the muhajir (refugee) card, recognized him as having a temporary right to stay in Pakistan. But Nowroz felt the political climate in the country was becoming increasingly hostile to Afghans, at least at the state level. Unlike previous ID documents, he viewed the POR card entirely exclusionary in its purpose and consequences because: “It feels like we are being told we should not stay. The card does not do anything for us; we cannot get access to [government] schools, hospitals, or rations. It does something for them [the government of Pakistan and UNHCR]; it tells them where we are. You can use it if you want to leave. But what does it do for us here [in Peshawar]?” The preceding chapters have shown that, for over forty years, Afghans have claimed a right to belong in Pakistan’s cities, and transformed them. As noncitizens, however, and because of the geopolitical significance of Afghanistan, Afghans have faced particular constraints. Amid interstate rivalries and global wars, the rights of Afghans to reside in Pakistan have been dramatically reduced in recent years. The present chapter examines the manner of this disempowerment. Close attention is paid to official ID documents, which reflect the ways in which Afghans have been subject to a hardening regime of population surveillance, detention, and deportation from Pakistan through changing technologies of migration governance—these have hardened since the WOT began. Next, it explains, how, since around 2000, Pakistan’s policy toward managing Afghans in the country centered on repatriation programs, which has been facilitated by biometric computerized ID cards and a tightening of rules concerning residency, mobility, and employment rights for Afghans in the country. Alongside these legal measures, the chapter discusses how Afghans have been subject to increased levels of state-led harassment in the form of stop and search, verbal and physical abuse, arbitrary detention (including mass arrests), and deportation, which was, as my interlocutors’ experiences revealed, often related to or facilitated by the ID card. Finally, it examines how Afghans responded to this regime of coercion and violence by restricting their mobility to highly localized settings or, in some cases, leaving Pakistan.

### **The Afghanistan-Pakistan Border and Population Surveillance**

During my fieldwork (2010–2018), the 2011 killing of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, by US special forces marked the start of the breakdown of the US and Pakistani military alliance, but several years would pass before

the conflict between the Pakistani military and the Pakistani Taliban would slow down. Pakistani military campaigns in the FATA continued apace, during which the WOT continued to be portrayed as a war against uncivilized Pashtun “tribes”—media coverage was replete with colonial discourse and imagery remobilized to justify massive displacements of people by bombing and shelling. In this process the Pakistani state set out to demarcate the historically blurred border zone of Pashtun territories—and its peoples—more clearly (see Chapter 1). This was related to Afghanistan’s continued denial of the validity of the Durand line, the spread of the war on terror into “mainland” Pakistan, and US military goals.

Since about 2000, this process of demarcation consisted of various forms of “border performativity,”<sup>1</sup> such as population removal/transfer and control over who can enter or exit the country via repatriation and deportations—much of which was facilitated by a new regime of paper documents, national identity databases, and other surveillance practices; engaging in border skirmishes between the Pakistani and Afghan armies; closing down refugee camps in the FATA; and, ultimately, incorporating the FATA as full districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Since the modern state is defined by a relationship between population, territory, and sovereignty, knowing who is present and having control over their mobility is central to the functioning of the state and showing if its borders work: this control is importantly managed through documents and surveillance.<sup>2</sup> Historian Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar explains that India and Pakistan did not just come into being by a “moment of arrival” in August 1947, with both countries’ territorial borders emerging fully formed.<sup>3</sup> Instead, independence and partition unfolded over a period of years—what Zamindar calls “the long partition”—that required the control of population movement made possible through a regime of documentation and surveillance. Permits were introduced in 1948 and passports in 1952.

Population control, enforced via documents would again be important after the 1971 Secession of East Pakistan/Independence of Bangladesh, when, in 1973, the National Registration Act led to the introduction of the paper-based national ID card (NIC) for all citizens.<sup>4</sup> The government wanted to enact “foolproof measures to prevent foreign nationals from obtaining Pakistani identity cards,”<sup>5</sup> and the NIC was one tool (among others) to delineate lines between the new/geographically remade Pakistani state and its former territory (now Bangladesh) and its populations. Additionally, in the 1970s, Pakistani Cabinet Office archives show that decisions surrounding the post-1971

ID cards were also related to concerns of internal security, including Balochistan, where the military was embroiled in a five-year-long attempt to crush an ethnonationalist movement for political reform or separation.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, control over populations and their mobility within the state, managed, in part, through ID cards, was also about upholding Pakistan's internal borders. This would be repeated in the first decade of this century, when a distinct ID card, the Watan card, was introduced in the FATA. It was during this period that the Afghanistan-Pakistan border would be clarified through control and management of Afghan mobility into, within, and out of Pakistan—a process managed by new computerized biometric identity cards.<sup>7</sup>

### Mapping Afghans: Censuses, Surveillance, and ID Cards

Population surveillance is “the focused systemic and routine attention to personal details for the purpose of influence, management, protection or direction,” and identification is “the starting point of surveillance.”<sup>8</sup> A national ID card is a plastic or paper document that is the physical manifestation of belonging within a nation-state. It is a mobile version of the files of information gathered about individuals, such as biometric data and information recorded from state censuses, surveys, and other enumeration mechanisms.<sup>9</sup> This indicates the need to refer to ID card *systems* rather than ID cards alone.<sup>10</sup> Today, the ID cards contain an embedded computer chip that is connected to networked and searchable databases (national registries) and are transforming modern governance. In Pakistan, all ID cards are managed by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).<sup>11</sup> NADRA is a private corporation established in 2000, but it answers to the Interior Ministry and reflects the global trend toward the privatization of state security and surveillance. From around 2005 to 2009 onward, ID cards gained greater importance in everyday life for citizens and Afghans alike. It is needed, for example, to get a mobile phone SIM card, open a bank account, pay utility bills, and travel on intercity transport.

Before moving to Pakistan, Afghan citizens had been tied to the Afghan nation-state via the *tazkira* (a paper-based national ID document). These were followed by a nationwide introduction of ID cards in the 1970s by the PDPA which also completed the country's first national census.<sup>12</sup> When Afghans migrated to Pakistan, many individuals and families held onto their *tazkiras* as proof of their Afghan nationality and to access land rights in

Afghanistan—actions underpinned by the hopes of return. However, these national documents were deemed to be of little use by the government of Pakistan. In order to be “seen” and made “readable”<sup>13</sup> Afghans needed to be identified and absorbed into the Pakistani state registration schemes, which were supported by the UNHCR. It was only after this bureaucratic process had been established that Afghans were viewed as eligible for refuge in accordance with the country’s tenuous framework of principles governing the protection of refugees.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, when Afghans moved to Pakistan for economic and political reasons, some were able to acquire Pakistani national ID cards (NIC), which had been introduced in the 1970s. Yet for Afghans who moved to the country in larger numbers from the late 1970s onward, the option to become a Pakistani citizen became less accessible. In 1979 and 1980, as the numbers of Afghans moving into the country started to quickly hit the hundreds of thousands, the government accorded all new arrivals with *prima facie* (on first encounter) refugee status. The government and the UNHCR deemed it “necessary to introduce an identity/ration card system [for Afghans] in order to minimize the possibility of double registration, ensure proper distribution of relief and goods and improve the administration of the refugee village.”<sup>15</sup>

Registration was paper-based and accompanied by a ration passbook (*sic*), officially known as the “Afghan *muhajirin* [refugees] passbook”—commonly called the *shanakhti* (identity) *pass*. The government claimed the passbook was “not an identity document, nor does it confer the right of citizenship on the refugees,”<sup>16</sup> but the use of the term *shanakhti* for “identity” is revealing. In practice, the document was associated with national and individual identity. Moreover, it was needed to access everyday basics, such as rations. As such, it functioned as a means of population classification, albeit one that conferred important entitlements.

There were a number of problems with the early registration system and *shanakhti* pass, including double registration. The registration system did not provide details of individuals beyond the “Head of Family,” who were usually men. The system thus institutionalized patriarchal social relations, reinforcing women’s dependency on men. Other issues arose from the lack of photographic records, which meant persons registered could not be accurately matched with documents.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the actual number of Afghan refugees registered in the country was not always clear. Moreover, as the case studies in preceding chapters show, not all Afghans lived in refugee camps. Those who lived outside of refugee camps did not always register for a *shanakhti*

pass. To supplement government registration, the military intelligence produced their own estimates on the numbers of Afghans,<sup>18</sup> but knowledge of the exact numbers living in the country remained partial. The state was more concerned with surveillance of Afghans as a way to support the war effort against the DRA and the Soviets rather than humanitarian relief efforts. Intelligence agencies operated in most refugee camps. A district/area administrator managed refugee relief, food, accounts, water, health, and security—the latter included surveillance concerned with limiting the possibilities of infiltration by Afghan military and security forces, above all KHAD, the Afghan intelligence agency, some of whom carried out attacks in the former FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan.<sup>19</sup>

The Afghan mujahidin resistance parties stationed in Pakistan also instituted their own ID cards. These allowed holders to access relief items issued by the mujahidin, specifically foodstuffs and soap, and tied recipients to the resistance through a kind of formal membership. Issuing ID cards was an important way for the mujahidin to perform sovereignty and project itself as a legitimate government in exile. In addition, the mujahidin also had their own system of military surveillance in refugee camps and local neighborhoods.<sup>20</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 1, by the 1990s, the US and its allies had lost interest in Afghanistan and Afghans in Pakistan. For Pakistan, however, Afghan nationals in the country and the fluid buffer zone of FATA retained strategic importance. The border zone offered a space in which the Pakistani state could patronize the emerging Afghan Taliban, as well as a plethora of militant groups for campaigns in Indian-administered Kashmir and elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1990s, repatriation schemes were tabled and discussed by the government of Pakistan and the UNHCR, but in only a few cases were these enforced<sup>22</sup>—despite the fact that Afghans were firmly categorized as having temporary asylum by that time. ID and registration schemes continued to develop and the categorization of Afghans as having “temporary” protection in the country became the standard practice in the discourse of the government and international migration regime. By the late 1990s, the international condemnation of the Afghan Taliban gained momentum and then accelerated after 11 September 2001 and the US-led NATO invasion of Afghanistan. After this point, population surveillance became more important, acquiring new significance as it enmeshed with evolving military and political strategies.

In post-2001 Afghanistan, as would be the case in post-2003 Iraq, the US military used biometric intelligence as a technique to separate “friend



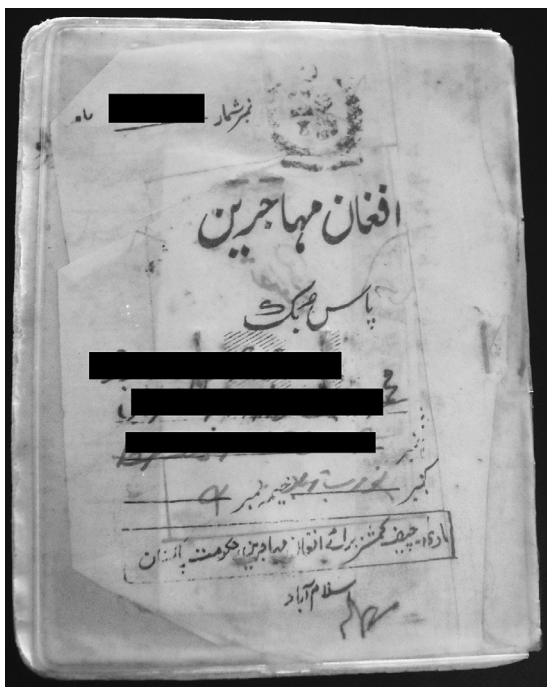


Figure 3. Afghan Muha-jirin (refugee) Passbook, issued by the government of Pakistan, circa 1986.

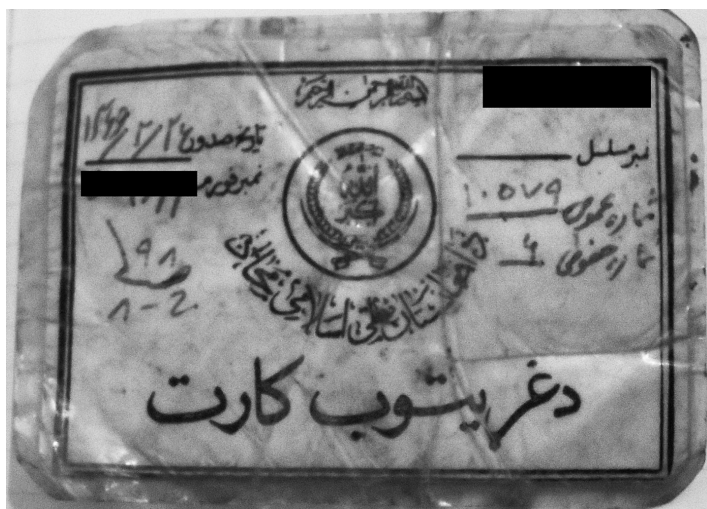


Figure 4. Membership card issued by the Hezb-e-Islami, part of the Afghan mujahidin, to Afghans in Pakistan, circa 1985.

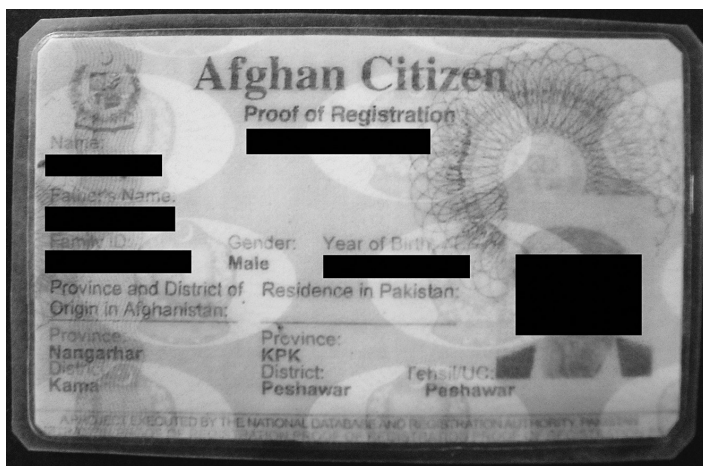


Figure 5. Afghan Citizen, Proof of Registration Card, issued by the government of Pakistan, 2010.

from foe”—a technique using facial recognition that was supposed to sift out suspected combatants from civilians.<sup>23</sup> The ID cards issued to Afghans in Pakistan were unrelated to direct military operations and were separate from those used by the US military in Afghanistan. However, the proliferation of ID cards for Afghans in Pakistan was linked to a wider projected need to map Afghans, in and outside of Afghanistan, by the US and its allies, and to prevent cross-border movements and thus support the war effort.<sup>24</sup> The drive for new ID cards and techniques of population management was also shaped by homeland security concerns in the Global North that were increasingly rooted in the desire to control, restrict, and deter the mobility of “risky” bodies (read Muslim, black, brown, and poor) from “risky” territories.<sup>25</sup> Pakistan’s introduction of ID cards (for citizens and noncitizens) was thus tightly wedded to the exclusionary migration policies of the US, the EU, and other Global North states.<sup>26</sup> In 2000, the US and European governments placed Pakistan on a migration watch list and instructed it to upgrade its paper passports to machine-readable passports and improve internal population management.<sup>27</sup> The Pakistani government formed NADRA that same year. Since then, the Pakistani government has also used NADRA databases and personnel to collaborate with the European governments, including in the UK, to verify the identity of asylum seekers that may be of Pakistani origin with the aim of facilitating deportations.<sup>28</sup> Within Pakistan, these ID cards would be

the linchpin of their policy toward Afghans, which was primarily concerned with repatriation programs.

### **Pakistan's Post-2001 Policy of Exclusion**

Because of years of conflict in Afghanistan, the country has produced a large transnational diaspora. In 2003, as a part of the neoliberal peace-building project that started after the 2001 US-led intervention in Afghanistan, the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan and the UNHCR restarted a series of tripartite talks and agreements to facilitate cross-border cooperation on the Afghan refugee issue (the first tripartite talks started at the end of the Soviet-Afghan war, but would peter out when the 1990s civil war and rise of the Afghan Taliban started). "Return" became a central objective of the UNHCR, Pakistan, Iran, and the recovering Afghan state, as well as the US and Europe, as is reflected in policy documents of the time. The various agreements declared Afghans as "Afghan Citizens" tied to the Afghan territorial state and only having temporary protection in Pakistan. In Pakistan's 2010–2012 Afghan Management and Repatriation Strategy (AMRS), managed by CCAR and SAFRON, repatriation was the central theme. In 2018, the Solutions Strategy for Afghans in Pakistan, a policy document by the UNHCR and government of Pakistan's SAFRON ministry, again focused on the "preferred solution [as] voluntary repatriation."<sup>29</sup>

In 2004–2005, efforts to improve population surveillance as a means of support to repatriation programs gathered momentum. In 2004–2005, with the support of UNHCR, the government of Pakistan carried out a nationwide census of Afghans.<sup>30</sup> Participation was mandatory.<sup>31</sup> During October 2006 to February 2007, this was followed up with an individualized ID card. Pakistan and the UNHCR introduced an Afghan refugee ID card, a biometric chip card officially known as the Afghan Citizen Proof of Registration (POR) card. Eligible for this were all Afghans who could prove that they had been living as refugees in Pakistan "between the period 1 Dec. 1979 and 12 March 2005 and were enumerated in the [2005] census [of Afghans in Pakistan]."<sup>32</sup> Registration for the card was also compulsory.<sup>33</sup> By 2007, 2.1 million Afghans over the age of five were registered on a national database and had a POR card.<sup>34</sup> But not everyone registered and for individuals who missed the opportunity to do so another chance to get a POR card presented itself in 2009–2010—although, as I will show, many deliberately opted not to register.

During the years 2000 to 2009, Pakistan also introduced a computerized biometric ID card for its own citizens, the Computerized National ID card (CNIC). Some 96 percent of all Pakistanis over the age of eighteen have a CNIC.<sup>35</sup> Periodically, ID cards have also been issued as means of distributing disaster relief to citizens, such as the Watan card after the 2010 national floods, or following the forced displacements resulting from military operations in the FATA. There have also been various unsuccessful attempts to register undocumented migrants in Karachi, including Bangladeshi and Burmese nationals. The political will to enumerate these noncitizens has been much less significant than it has been for Afghans—an indication that the reasons for the careful counting of Afghans is not just their being noncitizens, but that they are also geopolitically significant noncitizens.<sup>36</sup> These various ID cards have been regularly updated with new software and technologies, although it is worth noting that the new technologies for all ID cards were first tested on Afghans in 2009–2010.

In 2009–2010, the 2006–2007 Afghan POR cards were updated to include secure technologies and microchips—the card went from being a computerized ID card to a smart card. After children reach the age of five and above, the government of Pakistan and the UNHCR issues them individual POR cards.<sup>37</sup> In 2011–2012 there was another nationwide survey of Afghans, the Population Profiling, Verification and Response (PPVR) and Afghan Citizens Contribution to the Economy of Pakistan (ACCE). Further, in July 2017, an ID card and registration program for approximately one to two million undocumented Afghans over the age of five was rolled out with the support of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and other international funders.<sup>38</sup> Over twenty-one registration centers processed some 372,094 Afghans for Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC).<sup>39</sup> Across these successive and accumulative waves of enumeration Afghans have been subject to extensive programs of surveillance that underline the specific ways in which their experience has been shaped by geopolitical and strategic factors. At the same time, techniques of governance that have been first applied to them have often developed into wider policies.

The POR card is issued on a temporary basis. The process of extending the card—and thereby the Afghan right to remain in Pakistan—is negotiated in an ad hoc way through the tripartite agreements.<sup>40</sup> Every one, two, or three years, depending on political calculations by the government of Pakistan, cardholders have to return to registration centers to undergo the registration process again. Any personal information is updated; data is upgraded; and

in some cases new cards are issued. Sometimes an extension of the right to stay in the country is granted, without the card being updated. (Note that the ACC was also issued on a temporary basis—although how and if renewal will take place remains to be seen.)

What do these various ID cards mean for the mobility of Afghans within, into, and outside of Pakistan; what are the broader implications for Pakistan's border-making? On the one hand, the new computerized ID cards for Afghans are forms of "inclusionary" surveillance.<sup>41</sup> While there are no aid or social welfare benefits to be gained from having the cards, officials have said the POR card was designed to improve the management of Afghans living "temporarily in Pakistan"<sup>42</sup> and uphold principles of refuge as outlined by the UN, with which Pakistan is in de facto agreement. Meanwhile the ACC, which does not accord refugee status, does, in theory, provide legal protection from arbitrary arrest, detention, or deportation under the Section 13 of the 1946 Foreigner's Act.<sup>43</sup> Both cards importantly provide legal recognition in an international system defined by documentation and state-centric bureaucracy.

The POR card is necessary for Afghans who want to return to Afghanistan or apply for asylum in a third country. In Karachi, Yasmin, a twenty-eight-year-old Afghan Hazara explained, "I am getting all of my documents in order so that I can apply for asylum in Canada. My sister is already there and I want to join her. I was told by the *jamat* [in the Ismaili community] to get my POR card as one way of showing my refugee status."<sup>44</sup>

In general, the ID card—the CNIC, POR card, and potentially the ACC—has gained importance across Pakistan as formal and computerized identification is increasingly needed in everyday life.<sup>45</sup> Since 2000, NADRA's role in governance and national life has spiraled.<sup>46</sup> By the 2010s, the CNIC and the POR card were needed to open a bank account, purchase SIM cards, access education and health care, purchase property (only possible with a CNIC), rent property, pay utility bills, vote in elections (only possible with a CNIC), intra- and intercity travel, employment, and in countless other aspects of everyday life.

Pakistan appears to be lumbering toward one of Gilles Deleuze's control societies,<sup>47</sup> where the individual is tied to continuous and entangled networks that both limit and create opportunities for them (unlike Michel Foucault's discipline societies, where one leaves one institution and then goes to another, such as the school and hospital<sup>48</sup>).

Yet the introduction of ID cards for Afghans and even Pakistanis did not simply create a networked society. In the post-2001 Pakistani security

state, ID cards are paramount for internal security, or assisting counterinsurgency campaigns, and simultaneously upholding a racialized and exclusionary global migration regime. As mentioned, NADRA data has been shared with overseas governments for migration management/deportations. There was pressure to develop the cards in the context of the WOT. The Pakistani police and intelligence agencies use fingerprint technology on ID cards to identify victims of suicide attacks, as well as the attackers themselves.<sup>49</sup> And across Pakistan, as the fallout of the WOT spread across the country, ID cards became an informal requirement (in some areas it was mandatory) for legitimate movement in the context of conflict—a point I will return to.<sup>50</sup>

Among Afghans, the POR card has been viewed as an exclusionary tool accompanied by other forms of surveillance, growing restrictions, and systematic, discriminatory scapegoating. For example, the 2010–2012 AMRS required all Afghans who do not live in refugee camps—some 62 percent of the Afghan population—to register their presence at the local police station.<sup>51</sup> It also required all Pakistani landlords to “report their Afghan tenants to the respective Commissioners for Afghan Refugees [CCAR] and local police stations in the urban and rural areas. Landlords are to rent properties to Afghans very sparingly and in genuine cases only to Afghan refugees.”<sup>52</sup> Such injunctions have fundamentally undermined the rights, position, and security of Afghans across Pakistan. In Hayatabad in 2016, I interviewed Nurjahan, a fifty-year-old Afghan woman who had lived with her older brother, a wheelchair user, and elderly father (see Chapter 1). Nurjahan told me the ordeal of going to the police station was frustrating.<sup>53</sup> “We pay rent, but we found that in 2010–2011, fewer Pakistanis were willing to rent their homes to us. We started having to register our location at the local police station, which was difficult. I am not married, I never wanted to get married. My father and brother rely on me to get things done. I hate going to the [police] station. Sometimes they send out a decree, especially after a bombing, that we [Afghans] need to make ourselves known.”

The AMRS also said any Afghan businesses must be registered and monitored, while Pakistani employers and industries must register with CCAR and notify the police of any Afghan personnel—although it is preferable for Afghan employment to be “discouraged.”<sup>54</sup> In 2016, after a series of high profile terrorist attacks, the government, in coordination with NADRA, asked mobile phone companies to disable Afghan SIM cards and forced banks to close Afghan accounts to signal that Afghans were suspected of being fifth columns in the country.<sup>55</sup> Outside of Peshawar, in 2017 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s

urban areas of Upper and Lower Dir and Batkhela district, the Pakistan army issued verbal eviction warnings to some three hundred Afghan residents and instructed them to move to refugee camps, even though Afghans legally do not have to live in refugee camps.<sup>56</sup> Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's CCAR unit "took up the issue with the relevant army unit," outlining there was no need for such a move, indicating a conflict of interest between different state institutions.<sup>57</sup> CCAR is generally more sympathetic to the position of Afghans in the country, especially compared to the army and interior ministry; nonetheless, even most state institutions and government departments were (and are) of a similar opinion that Afghans should leave.

To return to the issue of Afghan ID cards, in this political context they reflect what Ariel Handel, working on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, describes as forms of exclusionary surveillance, where surveillance aims to divide and to separate specific population groups from the general demos (who will be subject to inclusive surveillance), even though all groups live in the same territory.<sup>58</sup> Exclusionary surveillance chases its subjects and spies on them "in order to prove that they do not belong to it."<sup>59</sup> Surveillance is a method used to withdraw state responsibility from certain population groups—those who are considered unnecessary, surplus, or redundant, such as slum populations or refugees.<sup>60</sup>

The POR card was specifically designed with the intention of facilitating cross-border returns.<sup>61</sup> Throughout my fieldwork, government officials were clear: the POR card helped them to get a grip on "the Afghan problem" in the country and enable repatriations. (It was after seeing the POR card's "success" that the government sought to implement a similar project for the country's undocumented Afghans—the latter was taken up with the International Organization of Migration's Afghan Citizenship Cards.)<sup>62</sup> In Pakistan, Afghans who are planning to return to Afghanistan register with a local UNHCR voluntary repatriation center (VRC) using their POR card where they are registered through biometric verification, which includes fingerprints and, in some waves of registration, iris scans.<sup>63</sup> Individuals and families are eligible for a lump sum payment (a financial incentive) to support return and reintegration.<sup>64</sup> This is received at UNHCR encashment centers in Afghanistan, but only after individuals authenticate their identity through the POR card and biometric verification (again). Once they do this, the POR card is cut at the corner to indicate it is no longer valid.

In 2015, the head of CCAR, the government body responsible for managing Afghans in Pakistan told me:



The POR cards have been very useful. The 2010 cards use very sophisticated technology. They were first introduced in 2007, but since 2010 cards the cards have very secure technology. The cards give protection. We now have data. We know who they [the Afghans] are, where they are, what their intentions are. Management of them is now possible. We keep monitoring them and can ask questions of them. With the card they are able to get a SIM card, move around, they are not harassed, they are not detained. . . . The cards are key to repatriation and the encashment centers.<sup>65</sup>

The official's comments reflect how the state is suspicious of Afghans as it tries to understand "their intentions." This sentiment simultaneously reveals how the state overestimates the cards' capacity for knowledge—the card does not actually measure what Afghans are planning on doing or not doing. The official continued speaking about the success of the POR card and that the aim was now to also get a grasp of all Afghans in the country, including those who were not legally considered to be refugees, such as wage and seasonal laborers who frequently cross the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and economic migrants. The official spoke of how the state was turning to its special relationship with the Gulf Arab states to secure its funding: "We are trying to get funding from the IOM, the Gulf [states] . . . maybe Saudi. Once we have the funds, we can launch a registration system for undocumented Afghans, so they can go back to Afghanistan. They should go back to their homes."<sup>66</sup> While in 2017, a UNHCR official based in Islamabad said, "The POR card is important because it gives Afghans a legal status. It also means that when they leave Pakistan [and go to Afghanistan], they can easily be accounted for in Afghanistan and at UNHCR [encashment] centers. . . . Afghans are not really refugees, they have a homeland to go to, sometimes they cross over the borders themselves and go back. So the government of Pakistan is just facilitating this return."<sup>67</sup> None of this is to suggest the function of ID cards is only subtractive. In one rather obvious sense documents such as the POR card (or even the older *shanakhti* pass) are means of national identity making. ID does after all stand for "identity."<sup>68</sup> To borrow from a historian of the passport, John Torpey, "the notion of national communities must be codified rather than merely 'imagined.'"<sup>69</sup> The POR, like the *shanakhti* pass before it, understands the "nationality" of Afghans as Afghan.<sup>70</sup> In everyday language, its users called it the "muhajir card" (refugee card), making themselves understood as noncitizens and as refugees. It is no coincidence that



Afghans who had CNICs and not PORs referred to themselves as “*now* being Pakistani,”<sup>71</sup> in my interviews with them since they had the relevant documents, while Afghans with the POR called themselves “Afghan.” Those without documents would simply say, “we have nothing,”<sup>72</sup> raising the question of whether undocumented persons were in fact even worse off than those who had been incorporated into the machinery of surveillance. This in turn suggests that the card offers some forms of legal protection and status of political existence that was seen as necessary by its holders.

### End of the Paper Citizen?

In other cases, I found NADRA's new technologies were used to reverse cases in which Afghans had become Pakistani citizens through acquiring what political scientist Kamal Sadiq calls “paper citizenship.”<sup>73</sup> Sadiq shows that Pakistan (and India and Malaysia, his other case studies) has a vast informal economy of counterfeit documents that allows refugees and undocumented migrants to acquire citizenship through informal channels. In this way, to dupe the system, the migrant noncitizen becomes a legal member of the national community. Or at least they did, before the advent of digital and biometric technologies.

From around 2005 onward Pakistan's “paper citizens” have found themselves being clamped down on as a consequence of political persecution and new technologies of surveillance. In 2010 and 2011, in Karachi and Peshawar I spent months observing the processes by which NADRA registers Afghans. In Karachi, there were two NADRA registration centers for Afghans. One was close to Camp-e-Marwarid, the other not far from Sohrab Goth; it was in the latter where I spent most of my time. I would enter the office just before it opened in the early morning and leave after they had closed, usually thirty minutes before the *maghrib* (sunset) prayer. I would move from one room to the next and then outside where the process was completed to observe and occasionally interview Afghans coming in for registration, NADRA office workers, and other institutional officers. Official buildings or buildings rented for an official purpose carry with them the pomp and glare of the sovereign. Representatives of the tripartite agreements between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and UNHCR oversaw the registration and reregistration of Afghans. Thus a UNHCR official, a government of Afghanistan official, represented by the Ministry of Refugee Repatriation, and a Pakistani government official, represented by the CCAR/ARRC in Karachi (only CCAR elsewhere), were present.

The Pakistani state was also represented via the intelligence officers, although this was never officially disclosed. A lone man, usually of a tall and imposing stature, dressed in Western attire (a pressed collared shirt and jeans or trousers, and nearly always wearing sunglasses) would appear on the scene and converse with the other Pakistani officials. He would be identified to me as the “office worker.” (The “retired” military status attached to his name on the business cards he gave out revealed formal links to the military.)

Hundreds of Afghans would be waiting from early morning until evening to be photographed, have their fingerprints scanned, and have personal information taken, rechecked, and stored in national databases.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, NADRA data processors would be sitting at their desks cross-checking their POR databases with the CNIC ones to check if any Afghans had, in Sadiq’s terminology, acquired Pakistani citizenship.

Shahjahan, a Pakistani data processor, eagerly explained to me, “Now if anyone has an Afghan card and a Pakistani *shanakhti* card it [the Pakistani identity card] immediately gets flagged up on the system when they come in for registration. This is how we catch them out.” Indeed, in theatrical style, with raised voices and a show of potential force, when individuals who had both Pakistani and Afghan identity cards were caught, a commotion would ensue. The individual would be taken aside for interrogation by a government representative or an intelligence officer. Shouting and pushing would ensue, usually on the part of the intelligence officer and government officials, and other Afghans in the center would peer across, trying to understand what was happening, watching, murmuring to each other in hushed voices. A sense of confusion and chaos was generated; waves of intimidation swept through the room as onlookers observed the abrupt dismantling of individuals’ lives amid castigation and personal tragedy on the spot as these unfortunates had their Pakistani identity revoked on the NADRA database and would often be placed under arrest. Again, the body is a pass code on the route to unbelonging by the removal of individuals from the database registry.<sup>75</sup>

A few Afghan fabric retailers, shopkeepers, and street hawkers who worked near where I was living in my aunt’s apartment in Clifton, Karachi, became trusted interlocutors over the years of my fieldwork. Since they knew I was working on Afghans in Pakistan, they would ask what the cards and registration were trying to achieve. Rumors had spread in their circles about what was happening to Afghan NIC/CNIC holders at NADRA centers, creating fear and, at the same time, spreading information that spurred the wider group into formulating strategies of adaptation.

Matiullah, a twenty-eight-year-old Afghan Pashtun and a POR card holder asked me, “They [the officials] say that the card is there to help us, but we do not get any help from it at all. Are they trying to throw us out of the country?”<sup>76</sup> While Shahab, a thirty-seven-year-old Afghan Pashtun retailer who had lived in Karachi since he was a child (and once for a short period in Camp-e-Marwarid (see Chapter 2)), was curious if his CNIC would still be valid if he registered with the POR card. Shahab still had relatives living in Camp-e-Marwarid who had not managed to get the POR card. When I told him he would lose his Pakistani CNIC, he said,

This is exactly what I thought. I have told my relatives not to get the POR card, unless they do not have the CNIC card, like my family in Camp-e-Marwarid. But even then, they seem to want to count all the Afghans, so that they can tell us that we cannot be here any longer. But they will not be able to throw us out. We have our connections, our money, our business, our homes. But, yes, for those who have the POR card they will be told to leave. We are Pakistani, we have the CNIC, they cannot touch us.<sup>77</sup>

Each time Shahab and I saw in each other in the years after our first set of meetings, he would again give me an update as to which of his family members had kept their CNICs, refusing to attend the POR card registration and then, later, the ACC registration systems. By 2016, nearly all his family members resolved to remain CNIC holders; only the few that had earlier obtained a POR were removed from the system. Shahab explained, “What will we do in Afghanistan? Who will we trade with? There’s no money for us there. No family. We’ve been in Karachi for so long. Our home is here, in this city.”

Importantly, there have also been various unsuccessful attempts to register undocumented migrants in Karachi, including Bangladeshi and Burmese nationals.<sup>78</sup> But none of these have been managed with any rigor. One can only speculate about why this is the case, but considerations of the geopolitical importance of the Afghan question in post-2001 Pakistan and for the US and its allies may be a significant factor.<sup>79</sup>

Further, many Pakistanis have also found themselves placed under surveillance for the purpose of exclusion—what Sadiq calls a purposeful state policy of creating “undocumented natives.”<sup>80</sup> There have been cases of Pakistani Pashtun CNICs being blocked in the Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan.<sup>81</sup> These are usually charges leveled against individuals and groups

because of some activity of political dissent or ethnopolitical tensions. In other cases, state or private investors' development plans on lucrative urban land have led to attempts to create undocumented natives by saying individuals do not have CNICs and are not in the NADRA database—in 2015, for example, this happened in the case of housing evictions of poor neighborhoods in the capital city of Islamabad.<sup>82</sup> However, in these cases, local community organization combined with political lobbying, or protests by Pakistani activists and local forms of knowledge (such as other citizens who vouch for these persons or an ability to check in with their villages and towns of origin) allowed these “natives” to keep their position as Pakistani nationals within the state. Afghans, on the other hand, when caught up in housing evictions, are either asked to consider relocation to a refugee camp or to repatriate.

### **The ID Card, the Checkpoint, and Violence**

One of the most significant impacts of ID cards has been to make mobility within the country harder for Afghans, other undocumented migrants, and other racialized groups such as Pashtuns, especially from the former FATA areas, and the Baloch. The issue here is not technology alone and the agency of the ID card, but how it combines with an increasingly hostile political climate to become a tool for discrimination and violence. In over eight years of fieldwork, nearly every interview I conducted had some reference to a lived experience of everyday state harassment that revolved around ID cards. So common were these instances that they became a kind of background noise to my research. Moving in and out of Camp-e-Marwarid in Karachi, for example, when I would enter the area with male Afghan interlocutors using public transport or a private car, we (or rather they, and me by association) were routinely asked to pay a bribe to a police officer, because, “Well, you are Afghan,” which was sometimes proved when they asked to see an ID card. As I traveled out of Hayatabad in Peshawar every day, either for fieldwork or to teach in the university, the township's main checkpoints would always be busy as the usual suspects had been stopped: the poor, and those who appeared to be Afghan nationals or residents of FATA.

Karachi's ethnopolitical violence since the 1980s and Peshawar's status as a frontier city meant residents of both cities were accustomed to checkpoints. The WOT, however, witnessed a dramatic increase in their frequency. Checkpoints are usually managed by one or more armed law enforcement officer(s), who

might vary from local police to a representative of a paramilitary group. Some checkpoints are permanent and predictable, even if the officers who are manning them change, while others appear and disappear unexpectedly without discernible rationale. They are visible across road networks, in front of official buildings, and at the entrances to local neighborhoods and private housing schemes. When people try to pass through checkpoints, either on foot, or by bicycle, rickshaw, taxi, public/private bus, motorbike, or car, the officer, upon seeing them coming, will either let them go through without stopping (albeit at a reduced speed) or commanding them to halt and show their ID card, and perhaps search the car and even them. To pass through checkpoints ID cards, although not a legal necessity, have become quite essential and are therefore indispensable for basic mobility in and between cities. Knowing the enormous hassle that results from the loss of any individual's ID card, even Karachi's notorious muggers deem theft of an ID card excessively inhumane and leave or dump it somewhere after they have taken your belongings (something I found out from experience).

In theory, the checkpoint is a surveillance tool used to enhance public security—a “public site of theatre”<sup>83</sup> to survey, police, and deter subversive political actors, which checks if individuals passing through have the right of movement. In reality, however, the checkpoint has many other consequences.<sup>84</sup> For underpaid and overstretched law enforcement agencies, namely the provincial police, it serves an economic function: rent-seeking police officers demand bribes to make some extra money; inevitably they tend to target the powerless—migrants, racialized groups, and the poor.

Since ID cards are needed to pass through any given checkpoint, the checkpoint becomes a site at which the nation-state border is enforced. The computerized ID card is portable (the plastic card) and virtual (the database).<sup>85</sup> At the checkpoint, the POR card communicates to the law enforcement officer in question that an individual is an Afghan national. Across both my field sites, and across different Afghan ethnicities (Pashtun, Tajik, Turkmen, Hazara, Baloch, and Uzbek), a shared Afghan experience of being stopped at the checkpoint or being subject to other forms of state violence was common. For the vast majority of Afghans I worked with over the age of thirty-five, most felt that, since the WOT started, the treatment of Afghans at the hands of state officials was much worse than anything they had experienced before; while for a younger generation of Afghans, police harassment was all they had known. Being stopped at checkpoints, routine arbitrary arrests, mass detentions, stop and searches, raids of neighborhoods, and, in some cases, deportations were a common experience from about after 2001.

Haji Faris, an Afghan Tajik, moved to Peshawar in 1980. He had fought in the Soviet-Afghan war as a part of the mujahidin. Throughout his time in Peshawar, he lived in one refugee camp, often working as a daily laborer in the city. When I met him, he was nearing 70 years old. He could not work as much as he used to, but would still travel in and out of the locality to meet family and friends, shop, and complete daily chores, a routine that was becoming increasingly difficult. He said:

We used to have ration cards before. Now we have POR cards. Before, we never needed to carry cards and IDs with us. But now we have them on us at all times. I keep mine in my pocket, even when I am asleep. What if they [law enforcement agencies] come into our house at night? No one used to ask us if we were a muhajir [refugee], Afghan, or who we were. People knew we fled the war. Everyone knew about the war. Big delegations from the UN and other organizations and countries would come to see us and give us money. Three *lakh* [rupees], ten *lakh* [rupees], lots of money came into our hands. But now we do not know what the next step will be. Are they expelling us? Do we need to leave? What will happen? Look at me. I am an old man [70 years old]. Look at my [white] beard. When I am on out the police stop me. They always stop me. Once they insisted I was a [suicide] bomber. Is this the age to be killing myself? Why would I do that?<sup>86</sup>

When I was teaching in Peshawar, one of my Afghan students, despite having a POR card, was absent for days, missing his exams after he had been arrested by the local police on his way to visiting his family. To mediate the difficulties that arise from the expiry of the POR card, he did what many other Afghans were doing: carried photocopies of different circulars issued by the SAFRON ministry and CCAR or Urdu and English newspaper articles that state that they have the right to remain in the country.<sup>87</sup> These photocopies were an attempt to prove his right to reside, albeit as a temporary resident. Papers, documents, laminated ID cards, and any number of additional material artefacts were carried around to protect against persecution by the state, a measure of the extraordinary level of harassment to which Afghans are subjugated.

Of course Afghans are not alone in being profiled, harassed, and extorted at the checkpoint by law enforcement officers. Class, ethnicity, nationality,

location in Pakistan, and gender mediate one's vulnerability to violations by the everyday state and its functionaries. Indeed, the vehicle in use (bicycle, rickshaw, taxi, private car—expensive or cheap), the style of clothing worn, and phenotypes affect whether you will be stopped at a checkpoint, even before documentation is requested.

Moreover, for Pakistanis living directly in conflict zones, mobility in and outside of their districts and localities is a precarious affair that is often managed through ID cards. During the Pakistani military's campaign, *Zarb-e-Azab*, residents in the then North Waziristan Agency (NWA) and in the then FATA were registered with a Watan card in addition to the CNIC. The Watan card was used to distribute humanitarian relief, but it was also used to complement the military operations that emptied NWA of all noncombatant populations. To monitor who was coming in and out of the area the Watan card was essential: movement in the NWA was impossible without it. In 2016, frustrated, Babar, a thirty-six-year-old Pashtun from NWA, threw his various ID cards down on the table of a tea shop where we were meeting in Peshawar's University Town. We were meeting after his cousin, and my former student, had been killed by unknown gunmen on his way to work in the FATA. His torment at the ongoing violence, the loss of his cousin, and his inability to move without keeping his documents with him all the time was taking its toll. "Look at this!" He said. "Look at how many documents we need to move. An ID card to get to my village? An ID card to move in Peshawar? We cannot move; we, tribal Pashtuns, are being made unwelcome in our own homes."<sup>88</sup>

The movements of residents of the then FATA, such as Babar, were placed under surveillance in and outside of their localities. When military conflict displaced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes into other parts of FATA or the main provinces, many found themselves under surveillance and their movements further restricted. In 2014, IDPs from the FATA were prevented from entering Sindh by the federal government as they were viewed as a security risk.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, once military operations ended, the government tried to encourage IDPs to return to their towns and villages. Many residents of the former FATA have been killed, disappeared, and tortured. However, the former residents of FATA were not, by and large, being told to leave the country or deported. By 2018, they were included as full legal members of the state—even if their position within society remains subordinate. Dead or alive, they have been accepted as Pakistani and Pakistan's problem. Consider, for example, that in 2018, a grassroots social movement, the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) (Pashtun Protection Movement), emerged

from the former FATA areas. One of the movement's demands is for accountability for alleged rights abuses committed by the military against Pashtuns in the long WOT—such as the destruction of homes and livelihoods, death, detention, and enforced disappearances. The security arm of the state has tried to intimidate the movement and its supporters to silence; they are an irritant to the state. Leading figures of the PTM and their supporters face repeated intimidation and arrest. Some have been killed, such as Arman Luni.<sup>90</sup> Yet none have been, at least not yet, deported for being noncitizens.

### **Mass Arrests, Deportations, Afghans Leaving, and Movement (Again)**

Afghans are just one of the groups that are discriminated against in Pakistan where ID cards have a facilitating role. But unlike other groups that can be extorted, displaced, killed, or disappeared, Afghans are encouraged to leave Pakistan. It appears the routine harassment Afghans have been subject to since 2000 has been an important factor in shaping many people's decisions to leave Pakistan (many, of course, have been directly deported).

It was difficult to document whether any official declaration calling for the harassment of Afghans had ever been ordered, and if so, by which government or military departments. Government officials have sporadically admitted in interviews that Afghans were being harassed as a point of state policy, but there is no official paper trail to confirm this.<sup>91</sup> Yet through interviews and reports I conducted and collected from lawyers' offices in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar, and judicial and magistrates' rulings, and interviews with Afghans, I found harassment, discrimination, mass arrests, and violence perpetrated by the state were common in particular situations: first, when a POR card was about to expire; second, in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, when Afghans found themselves routinely scapegoated.

In the months after the POR card expired in 2009–2010 (and then again in 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2017) mass arrests and detentions of Afghans were commonplace across my field sites and the country.<sup>92</sup> I found groups of two to groups of hundreds, including almost entire neighborhoods, being arrested at a time. In Karachi's Camp-e-Marwarid in 2010 I was told, "One elder had to go and get 150 people released who had been arrested in one go. At another point, 40 people were taken. . . . I went to the prison [after a case of mass arrests] and there were 210 people there." In 2015, in an informal neighborhood in



Peshawar, residents complained that “the police came and arrested the young boys [10–12 in number],” questioning the validity of their POR card.

The POR card extension/renewal process is conducted on an ad hoc basis and usually after the card expires. This leaves a period when Afghans have no legal status, during which they do not have the protection of international humanitarian law. Instead their “illegal” presence is constructed as a potential risk to the nation-state, which is also what enables and indeed legally sanctions the high state-led persecution of Afghans, evident in abuse, raids on homes, arbitrary detention, and mass arrests.

In some cases, when the POR card expired, the individual’s right to stay in Pakistan was extended, but the physical card was not updated. So, Afghans could be carrying POR cards in 2011 which had expiry dates of 2009 or carrying cards in 2017 which had expiry dates of December 2015. Judicial magistrate rulings show that when individuals and groups were put on trial for having an out-of-date card, judges were unsure of the legal position of Afghans in Pakistan. In one judicial magistrate’s court case in Peshawar in February 2010, for example, an Afghan refugee was arrested under Section 14 of the 1946 Foreigners Act, which was upheld on the basis of the POR card. The verdict states: “This court feels that Afghan Citizens who are/were refugees, but their statuses of refugees have ended on 31-12-2009 and their status have not been renewed by the concerned officials, hence they have become foreigners in circumstances and hence they should not be entitled for bail on concession on the basis of old Afghan Citizenship card.”<sup>93</sup>

In 2015, UNHCR field reports showed that “Afghan refugees were arrested on the pretext of the expiry date, 31 December 2015, written on the Proof of Registration card after being asked for legal documentation as part of security checks. Many were subsequently released after several hours of detention at police stations.”<sup>94</sup> Confusion surrounding the renewal of POR cards was compounded by poor communications between government departments on the status of Afghans in Pakistan. When the first ever POR card (issued in 2006–2007) expired in December 2009 there was a gap in the expiry and the renewal of the right to remain in Pakistan. Official correspondence from the CCAR Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offices (then NWFP) to provincial police offices outlined that the mass arrests of Afghans were not in line with their official policy, which they felt should be adhered to since they were the government department responsible for Afghan refugees.<sup>95</sup> Circulars were also issued in Sindh dated 28 October 2009, in anticipation of issues that may arise from the expiry of the card, stating that Afghan POR cardholders had a right to remain

in the country.<sup>96</sup> Yet the letters, I was told by CCAR officials, were not really read or acted on. “We’ve tried to communicate with the police agencies to tell them that Afghans can stay. We’ve written the letters to the departments, so I do not know why these arrests keep happening.”<sup>97</sup> Here, despite structural discrimination against Afghans being routine, some of the violence people were subject to was not intentional, but a result of bad governance.

In response to mass arrests, in Karachi’s Camp-e-Marwarid, people would go looking for family members, neighbors, and friends in local jails to find any missing people and try to get them released. Yaqub Gul said, “At one point [in 2010] I was in Karachi trying to get people released. Then I was in Jacobabad, or Larkana, or Sukkur, or Kashmore [all in Sindh]. I had relatives telling me they were having problems in Quetta [Balochistan]. It was constant. We would constantly be trying to get people released.”<sup>98</sup> Even Camp-e-Marwarid’s elders and middlemen were not spared the humiliation of arrest. Rumors were circulating in Karachi’s Afghan networks about one elder, Haji Shah’s arrest. He had arrived at the local police station to act as a mediator in a local conflict and ended up being arrested himself. I was told, “The police had arrested some Afghans and Pakistani Pashtuns over some dispute that got out of hand. A few people got arrested and Haji Shah was called with some other Pakistani Pashtun elders to try and resolve the situation. But you know what the police did? They put Haji Shah in jail.” Out of frustration, however, residents from Camp-e-Marwarid staged a spontaneous protest at the nearby police station. “When they arrested Haji Shah, so many people from Camp-e-Marwarid descended on the police station. They walked down and demanded he be released. The police got worried and let him go. But you can see that we have a lot of problems; if they are arresting the elders, how will they be fair to the poor, to the worker?”<sup>99</sup>

Instances of individual and mass detention—including even for POR cardholders—continued throughout the 2010s and, as mentioned, would peak after major terrorist attacks. In a number of cases Afghans were also deported. In an interview in 2017 with a UNHCR official, I learned that such removals were known to the authorities, who viewed them as legitimate acts of policy: “If Afghans have no documents they are not refugees. . . . It is only right that the government deports them.”<sup>100</sup> This principle was changed when the ACC card was given to these very undocumented Afghans and managed by the IOM. When a deportation is ordered, it is meant to be managed by provincial government departments. Yet often the responsible government departments lack the resources to carry out population removals.<sup>101</sup> In many

such cases, prisoners pay for deportation themselves, if they can afford it—and only then will Pakistani law enforcement agencies release them and escort them out of Pakistan. In other cases in Camp-e-Marwarid, Yaqub Gul and Habibullah explained, “When people are ordered to be deported, we try to help. We help if they are stuck in the prison cell. Some of the people who are being deported are from our family [kin]. Others have been our neighbors for years. We try to pool money, and get their kin to pool money, so we can arrange a car or the petrol for the vehicle. We both go and do a number of border-crossings ourselves.”<sup>102</sup> While the heavy arm of the security state is trying to make the border through population removal, it often lacks the capacity to complete the process. As a result an unknown number of Afghans are languishing in Pakistani jails; and in other cases, they simply get released from prison by paying a bribe, moving back to their localities.

In Gul Kalay (Chapter 4) when I returned to the area in 2013 and 2015 residents updated me about the novel forms of harassment they had faced. Asfandiyar Ali was worried about his sons, including Ilyas, who was 21 years old, and Yusuf, who was 15 years old. They had been arrested a number of times. This included when the 2006–2007 card expired (2009–2010) and after a series of major bomb blasts had taken place in Peshawar (2013–2014)—the aftermath of which involved a series of night raids in the area. It also included when they passed through checkpoints. Asfandiyar explained,

Things have changed in the past few years. I am worried anytime I leave the area. I try not to go too far. I was arrested twice this year when I was going through a checkpoint, but I managed to get away by paying a bribe to the officer. They see you coming. They know we are Afghan, they know our Pashto [dialect] is different to the one spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. We are also worried when we are in the area. Anytime a blast happens in the city, we know we will get stopped at the checkpoints and we worry that the police will come in and raid the area. They already raided the area three times in the past few months. Always at night, when the men are at home. Usually they come and round up Afghans. They ask for our muhajir [POR] cards. When they arrested Ilyas, they took him to the jail. They said Afghans are not allowed to live in the country anymore. Ilyas has his POR card. We are allowed to stay [in Pakistan]. But the police didn't care. The officer said we needed to pay Rs. 1000 to get him out. They will take our money and then let us go.<sup>103</sup>

Midway through, Ilyas intervened. He had been holding his cricket bat, seated on the *charpoi*, listening carefully. Ilyas was studying at a private college in University Town. He was also teaching English at a language center in Saddar. He was a friend of most of the young men in the area, Afghan and Pakistani. Many of these young men would leave the area together to go to college, to take courses, attend university, and work, or just for outings in the city. Ilyas usually walked to work, but sometimes took a bus. He and his other Afghan friends invariably faced more issues from local law enforcement officers than his Pakistani friends. He had come up with a host of strategies to try to avoid being stopped by the police: carrying lots of books, so as to look studious; avoiding, where possible, traveling with too many other Afghan friends; speaking Urdu, loudly, on the phone (and not Pashto), so as to look like he was an Urdu-speaker/Punjabi/Kashmiri. He trained his younger brother, Yusuf, to say that he has no ID card if the police ever asked, so they would think he is Pakistani (the Pakistani CNIC is issued only after the age of 18).

I grew up on these streets. But we are Afghans and it is not acceptable to be Afghan anymore. Yusuf was born here, but even when he is on his way to school, they stop him. It [police harassment] is every day. When I was arrested here, in Gul Kalay, we had been playing cricket, not too far away from the main road. A police officer came toward us and started asking questions. The police officer pushed me. He hit me on [the back of] my head. I was the only Afghan there that day. They made me show my [POR] card. I always keep the card with me—even when I am asleep. But it made no difference. I was in the cell after that. . . . The cell was damp. . . . They said I would be stuck there unless we paid them the money. A thousand rupees. The people of the neighborhood, Pakistani and Afghan, gave my father the money after he told them what happened. I think he was upset. The neighbors pooled some money, from their earnings, and I was released.

They [the police] always come for us [Afghan]. Every single day. They say we should go back. “Muhajir!” They shout it at us, like an insult. They accuse us of being terrorists. They say we are Al-Qaeda, the Taliban. When the situation gets bad [bombs going off in the city] I cannot work for days. I worry they will arrest me. When I go to the vegetable market they [the police] ask for money at the checkpoints.

When we go to college they [the police] ask for money [at the check-point]. When we play cricket, they ask for money. This is a part of their job. It is their business to send us to jail and make some money. Sometimes they want snacks, food, drinks, tea. Anything!<sup>104</sup>

Asfandiyar and Ilyas show that a good deal of police harassment is a mechanism for extortion. For Asfandiyar and Ilyas the harassment they faced was the result of their Afghan presence in Peshawar no longer being deemed acceptable to state authorities—Pashtun or not. For them, police harassment is a routine affair. Trying to engage in basic mobility in the city—to go to work, to shops, to visit friends, to walk, or simply take public transport had become torturous. Even being sedentary in the neighborhood is marked by insecurity, with raids on homes occurring after bomb blasts. The term “muhajir” is used by the police officer in a derogatory way to signal his “Otherness.” But it is also used and accepted by Ilyas as a signifier of his connections with other Afghans also undergoing this experience, which has forged a shared Afghan experience within Pakistan that across lines of ethnicity and tribal group.

Since the 2010s, UNHCR reports show a steady increase in the number of legal aid programs on offer for Afghans in Pakistan because of increased police harassment.<sup>105</sup> Repatriation reports specifically cite “arbitrary arrest, night raids on homes, and extortion and bribery” as the “primary push factors influencing refugees’ decision to return.”<sup>106</sup> While Pakistan’s Afghan refugee management policy repeatedly claims it is pursuing “voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and dignity,”<sup>107</sup> Afghan lived experiences do not match this claim. Repeated arrests, violence, and harassment lead to a feeling of “bordering” by Afghans; here the border is a metaphor for social exclusion but also can lead to a change in behavior, namely physical exit from Pakistan. In 2017 Human Rights Watch said Pakistan was engaged in one of the world’s “largest unlawful mass forced return of refugees,” as many felt they had no choice but to leave.<sup>108</sup> More and more Afghans are leaving Pakistan for Afghanistan or, more often than not, Europe, Turkey, or other states. This is not forcible expulsion per se, but in the very least it reflects a process of coercive rather than voluntary repatriation or outward migration. Fed up and frustrated, in Gul Kalay Ilyas told me, “Peshawar is my home. It is all I know. We have nothing in Afghanistan. No land, no family, no one. But I am learning English so I can leave the country. This is my home, but what else can I do? My friends have gone to Afghanistan and left [to a third country] from there. Maybe I will do the same.”<sup>109</sup>

### Dreaming of the City as Home

In 2015, as the so-called European refugee crisis started, I was living in Berlin, Germany. I gradually—and serendipitously—started to meet Afghans from Pakistan in the city. In 2015, I soon also started to meet a few Afghans I had worked with in Pakistan in Germany and different parts of Europe. As I carried out interviews with them sometimes I would deliver small letters and parcels from their families and friends who had stayed behind in Karachi and Peshawar (with my European passport and research grant I was still traveling between Europe and Pakistan quite frequently). In 2015 Europe, Afghans were the second largest population seeking asylum after Syrians who were fleeing violence in Syria.<sup>110</sup> Most of these Afghans had “origins” in one of the three largest Afghan countries: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. As these Afghans arrived in Germany, however, I was told in discussions with social workers, lawyers, and policy makers, that Afghans were assumed to be coming exclusively from Afghanistan. Several years later, there is now some recognition that not all Afghans were coming from Afghanistan—however, since most Afghans do not have Pakistani citizenship, asylum applications, as well as deportation plans, still categorize them as Afghan nationals.<sup>111</sup>

In 2015 in Camp-e-Marwarid I had been visiting Yaqub Gul when he asked me to call his cousin when I went back to Berlin. Hidayatullah, Yaqub Gul’s cousin, was a thirty-seven-year-old Afghan Uzbek who had moved from Karachi to Turkey and then Europe. A few weeks later I called Hidayatullah to find he was living in a small town in southern Germany with his wife and two children. He told me he left for a number of reasons, including a search of a better life that the Global North has to offer, but also because of the increased levels of state harassment he faced in Karachi. “We just don’t know if we would be allowed to stay or not,” he said. Yet for Hidayatullah and others I knew, it was Karachi, and the cities in which they were born and lived that were remembered as home: a home he someday hoped to return to, even if now he was on a pathway to residency, perhaps even citizenship, in Europe. He expressed gladness to see me, relief seeing someone he had known from Karachi, or at least someone who knew his city, his home. “Finally,” he said, “someone from home whom we can talk to.”<sup>112</sup>

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”<sup>113</sup> For Hidayatullah, and so many others like him, who have exercised the right to leave several countries, none of which feel very much like their own, this

declaration contains an important ideal that is often forgotten in discussion of refugee protection. It accords the refugee the right to return to his country. But for Hidayatullah, it is the city, Karachi, that he longs for. Unfamiliar with the country of his citizenship, Afghanistan, and unable to become a citizen in Pakistan, it is not the nation-state he wants to or can return to. Instead, it is the city—its people, its spaces and places—that embraced him, formed him—and he it—that he imagines as home.





## CONCLUSION

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The international system affords refugees important forms of protection: the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees enshrine the principle of non-refoulement, the practice of not forcing refugees or asylum seekers to return to a country in which they are liable to be subjected to persecution. Whilst critics have pointed to the initial discrimination of the 1951 convention—it was a tool designed primarily for Europe’s post-World War II refugees—many accept that the 1967 protocol’s inclusion of the decolonizing world into international principles of refuge has offered some form of protection and access to humanitarian relief. But in recent years, the international asylum system has come under pressure; nation-states have become increasingly dismissive of international principles of refuge. Those who now flout them include Western liberal/democratic states. Racism and xenophobia are central to the very nature of Western liberalism, but these states have at least prided themselves on paying lip service to the principles of universal human rights. This appears to no longer be the case. The clearest manifestation of this is the fact that the deportation and illegal “push-back” of refugees and asylum seekers is increasing and being normalized as a strategy of governance.

In 2016, the European Union declared Afghanistan a safe country. It was not. It is not. Cast as economic migrants, between 2016 and 2020, 937 Afghans seeking asylum were deported from Germany alone.<sup>1</sup> In 2019, it was revealed that children who had sought refuge in the UK were being deported as soon as they turned eighteen: Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia were some of the countries of “return.”<sup>2</sup>

During 2020–2021, Denmark decided not to renew the residence permits of 380 Syrians, claiming that certain parts of Syria, ravaged as it has been by war since 2011, are “safe.”<sup>3</sup> In 2021 the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan. Media savvy and actively engaged in social media, the Taliban assured a smooth transition to power. But day one of their takeover produced the

defining—and most harrowing—image of the failings of a twenty-year war in Afghanistan and the fear of ordinary citizens. As a US cargo plane on Kabul airport's runway was taking off, people were still trying to board the plane; some were clinging on to it for dear life, desperate to flee. Once airborne, shaky video footage shows at least two bodies falling from the sky. Nineteen-year-old Afghan national youth team footballer Zaki Anwari was one of those killed. Shockingly, however, at the time of the takeover and, as this book goes to print, in the weeks and months after, several European governments continue to proclaim their intentions to continue to deport Afghan nationals.

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Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, but has claimed to act in its spirit since mass Afghan migration into Pakistan gathered pace in the 1980s. Yet this book has illustrated the ways in which Pakistan has dismantled its hospitality toward Afghans, repatriating millions and creating a viciously hostile environment for those who wish to remain. For Afghans newly entering the country after the 2021 Taliban takeover this hostility remains—at best it can be said Pakistan has agreed to act as a site of transit for newly displaced Afghan nationals seeking to relocate to a third country. Pakistan is using the global normalization of anti-migrant governance for its own objectives.

A growing language of securitization and risk dominates migration and citizenship in the post-2001 world, in which rendition, extradition, and even the removal of citizenship have been normalized.<sup>4</sup> Civil liberties and the rights of migrants have suffered directly as a result. Citizens themselves are under threat from this process of “roll back.” In the UK, British citizens who moved to the country from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1973, then a part of the British commonwealth (which at the time allowed automatic permanent residence in the UK), have found themselves being stripped of their status as citizens and deported to countries they never lived in as adults. The British government has also stripped the citizenship of those suspected to be involved in terrorism outside of the UK; often the individuals in question are the children of immigrants. Both cases have laid bare the reality that for racialized migrants, citizenship can be reversed.

In Pakistan, and in other states of the Global South including in the South Asian region of which it is a part, the rights of migrants and pathways to citizenship have always been precarious. The reasons for this are rooted in

colonial inheritances, which always securitized the movement and belonging of colonial subjects, contested post-independence borders, communalist chauvinism, militarism, and the legacies of two bloody and violent partitions in 1947 and 1971.

Despite this, Afghans experienced relatively high levels of socioeconomic incorporation and security of residence within Pakistan during the first two decades of their migration to Pakistan. Some managed to become citizens through informal channels. This relatively positive history of settlement has made the sudden twist of fate they have undergone since 2001 all the more painful. State directives have coerced them to leave neighborhoods, towns, and cities of which they are a part—which they built with their own hands. Some of those who managed to acquire citizenship have been violently stripped of it, with devastating implications for them and their families.

Over a period of forty years, Pakistan's longer-term Afghans—Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Turkmen, Baloch, and others—have forged emotional and material attachments to places, built communities, and contributed toward the transformation of cities in Pakistan. Through shared struggles to secure access to services and resources—water, sanitation lines, housing, jobs—and with reference to their work as laborers in numerous sectors, Afghans claim rights of residency in the towns and cities of which they are a part. They articulate strong bonds of identification with their neighborhoods and homes, with cities and localities they breathed life into and sustained. They anchor their lives through social and kinship ties—relationships grounded in everyday, grassroots life and struggles, some of which cut across lines of nationality and ethnicity.

Pakistanis too are, of course, a part of Afghan life worlds, despite the obvious differences between citizens and those who are being forced to leave the country. In low-income housing areas, at the social level, there is recognition of a mutual struggle, one that dictates and evokes reliance of the poor on each other. The state may not allow the naturalization of Afghans, but in the areas where they live, they are understood to be a part of a shared community. Local yet universal, personalized, forms of *insaniyat* (humanity) shaped by shared lived experiences can and do have the potential to elide and frustrate state power and legalistic categories of belonging.

Prevailing narratives tell us the city is an individualizing, anonymizing space. In the *katchi abadi*, *goth*, the informal or formal refugee camp, or even in the apartment complex,<sup>5</sup> this is not necessarily the case. Instead, through stark awareness of the inequalities and structural discriminations that govern

peoples' lives—citizens or not—within a shared space, a common urban identity has emerged. It is through a moral understanding of their humanity in the face of discrimination that people are compelled to act together to secure the rights they feel they are due—citizens or not. This is an urban citizenship recognized by people in local communities and neighborhoods. People take responsibility, as they must (for the state will not intervene in their favor), to improve social welfare for themselves and others in the cities of which they are a part.

The state's approach to governance of Pakistan's poor is rather minimalist. It is also different from how governance is enacted in regulated housing settlements, private, gated communities, and military housing schemes. For the poor, the state encourages—or is accepting of—redistributive acts through social networks and local community altruism. It relies upon middlemen, brokers, and patrons who mediate between the state and local populations. The informal sphere is not separate from the modernizing impulse of the city; it is an accepted, tolerated, and normalized strategy of governance. Everyday acts of informally redistributing goods and resources that ordinary people engage in are, paradoxically, a central part of urban governance over large populations that the state cannot or does not wish to govern directly—a way of maintaining the status quo, and outsourcing responsibilities to others to deal with the masses. Afghans are not citizens, so they do not offer the potential electoral vote that is often so coveted in the informal sphere, but they are a source of economic profit via rents, utilities, and available workers.

However, the informal sphere also creates challenges for the state. It is leading to large-scale unregulated growth. It is also fragmenting power across the city, as reflected in the way that middlemen, criminal gangs, or the land and water mafia have a growing importance in the city for access to resources—or even conflict resolution—rendering the state offices redundant.

For ordinary people life in the informal sphere is also marked by precarity, hazardous building structures, and poor access to basic goods: water, electricity, health care. The middleman, broker, or landowner has little regard for the security and well-being of the people to whom they provide services for profit, or rent property to. The lives of Pakistan's urban citizens should not be romanticized through notions of "resilience," "survival against the odds," or as urbanist Ananya Roy has so aptly called the "Slum Dog Millionaire" effect, which are used when discussing the poor in the Global South.<sup>6</sup>

And yet, despite the difficulties that confront the subjects of this book, frustrations are not articulated against each other in their shared neighborhoods along the lines of national or ethnic identity. Instead, there is a lucid critique of

state failings, the shortcomings of the international aid and refugee regime, and the coercive powers exercised by power brokers. Rights to resources, services, and spaces are claimed on moral grounds. In Karachi, where other nationalities are present in larger numbers—Bangladeshis, the Rohingya, Sri Lankans, and others—they are also part of this story, as are Pakistan's own poor.

Within this wider group, Afghans are distinguishable by virtue of their vulnerability to the shifting winds of geopolitical rivalries, lingering colonial epistemologies and unfinished processes of South Asian border-making. In the post-2001 climate, Pakistan's Afghans have become hypervisible as a potential security risk. The result is a targeted, coordinated repatriation drive that singles them out from other immigrants. Between 2002 and 2018 a staggering 4,374,208 Afghans left Pakistan for Afghanistan, the largest refugee repatriation of recent times.<sup>7</sup>

Gestures toward the formal inclusion of Afghans as citizens in Pakistan by politicians have been rapidly shouted down. In September 2018, Imran Khan, leader of the March 2018 elected government of the center-right Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf promised citizenship to Afghans in Pakistan. In front of a gathering in Karachi he said, "Afghans whose children have been raised and born in Pakistan would be granted citizenship *inshallah* [God willing] because this is the established practice in countries around the world."<sup>8</sup> The announcement caused uproar within Pakistan's political and military establishment. Khan, who is alleged to have won the 2018 elections because of the military, dropped the idea quickly. Even human rights groups and activists have been largely silent on the treatment of Afghans in Pakistan, a striking and damaging omission this book seeks to address. In Afghanistan, former president Ashraf Ghani promised to "bring back all Afghans from Pakistan,"<sup>9</sup> leaving little room to appreciate the ways in which many Afghans want to (and do) remain in the towns and cities in which they have lived for over forty years.

South Asia's tense interstate relations—shaped as they are by unresolved contests over colonial or independence era borders, as well as the legacies of two bloody partitions—mean that regional migration has historically been viewed as a potential threat to the territorial integrity of the state. As in Pakistan, across the region, national citizenship and migration laws are restrictive; it is difficult to be naturalized as a citizen; and aside from Afghanistan, most states are not signatories to the UN 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. None of this has prevented regional migration. The stories of this book are a testament to this. Aside from Pakistan, in Afghanistan, there are over seventy thousand refugees from Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> India is

home to millions of Bangladeshis (estimates vary from three million to fifteen million) and refugees and asylum seekers from Burma, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.<sup>11</sup> Bangladesh has nearly one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and an unknown number of “stateless” former West Pakistanis (Biharis).<sup>12</sup> Much of South Asia, perhaps, can tell us a story about informal urban citizenship which cuts across lines of legalistic belonging. It can also tell us about the ways in which the attempts to territorialize space and mobility in the region have never fully been implemented.

Yet across these various states, new surveillance technologies are being rolled out that are supporting policies of migrant returns and a more stringent policing of mobility. Across South Asia, deportations are increasing, much of which is facilitated by new technologies of identity management. Since 2000s, mobility within the region appears to be undergoing the most far-reaching transformations since Partition in 1947. In Afghanistan in 2018 the government introduced the e-Tazkira, a computerized identity card and database for all citizens. The card is one tool among many to control internal mobility—including the issue of refugee returnees and IDPs. In 2016 Bangladesh introduced the smart National Identity Card (NID) as a part of its “Digital Bangladesh” initiative and, in 2018, in collaboration with UNHCR, it registered over 890,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar with smart ID cards, the National Verification Card (NVC). In Bangladesh, the Rohingya refugees say the ICS introduced for them are, in their words, “genocide cards” that will mark them as noncitizens who will be forced to go to Myanmar and potentially subjected to the genocidal violence of the ethnonationalist state.<sup>13</sup> In 2019 in India, the right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which centers on the issue of regional migration. The Act offers citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, and Christian refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, but will not include naturalization for Muslims. This comes on the back of the National Registration of Citizens (NRC), which is upheld via computerized databases and is being criticized as a tool to potentially render Muslim citizens—and other marginalized groups—stateless. Coupled with the CAA which is designed to exclude undesirable Muslim outsiders, the NRC points to the ethnoreligious internal domination of the state that the BJP wants to secure. The NRC was trialed in Assam in 2018; approximately one million people were registered on computerized databases only to be excluded as noncitizens almost immediately. Over 50 percent were Muslim.<sup>14</sup>

A pressing question, then, is starting to emerge in South Asia that will, in the coming years, require attention: how are new technologies of surveillance transforming governance, belonging, and mobility in the postcolonial state? And will it transform the prevalence of informal “urban citizenship” in the region?

In 2020, a young Pakistani filmmaker and intellectual, Arafat Mazhar, offered his answer to this question. His short dystopian sci-fi animation *Shehr-e-Tabassum* (The City of a Smile),<sup>15</sup> set in a fictional 2071 Pakistan depicts a totalitarian regime governing every aspect of daily life, in which smiling is mandatory; a society in which noncompliance results in extermination. The film shows citizens being standardized and controlled through technologies encoded on, and into, the body—from headsets to the monitoring of heart rate and stress levels. Yet the film also shows—or promises—the potential for direct resistance and confrontation. Glimpses of the persistence of informality still seem to exist in Mazhar’s imagination.

Pakistan is not yet the Orwellian authoritarian state as depicted in *Shehr-e-Tabassum*. It has neither reach nor resources to enact a regime of sophisticated totalitarian control—it can barely afford to deport the Afghans it so desperately wants to “cleanse” from its territory. Instead, Pakistan’s continued reliance on various informal networks of power continue to mark how the state—and governance—functions. Yet, as we have seen, changes in technologies are affecting how governance is executed and it is having an impact on who belongs, and who does not. The Pakistani state’s desire to manage Afghans in the country is a part of its efforts to make the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan clearer and manage the fallout of the WOT. This has, to a degree, worked. It has also led to feelings of insecurity for Afghans in the country who face an increasingly hostile environment in Pakistan.

There are, however, still some 2.5 to 3 million Afghans living in the country who claim the towns and cities in which they live as rightfully theirs, alongside others. Even for those who leave, moving to Kabul, Europe, or Iran, the cities of which they have been a part remain sites of attachment—in memory, identity, and emotions, as well as through remittances, visits, return, cultural practices, and social relations.

In 2018 and 2019, the Afghan Cricket Board ordered players living abroad, namely in Peshawar, to return to Afghanistan if they wanted to continue playing for the national side. The national team has started to gain traction on the international stage as heroic underdogs. Many of the team had lived in Pakistan. If players refused to return, they were fined and faced match

bans. The idea that Afghan nationals, especially representatives of a sporting national team, would live in a neighboring and rival state was deemed embarrassing. In reality, Peshawar's status as home and a city for Afghans—cricketers and others—accurately reflects the complex interconnections of people's lives across these two nation-states. It is striking that for many Afghans in Pakistan, and indeed for many of those who have been callously banished from its territory, understandings of community and attachment to place are forged and experienced not with reference to this or that nation-state. Rather, they are experienced (or remembered) with reference to cities like Karachi and Peshawar. It is testament to the depth of feeling for and identification with these places that, despite the treatment meted out to them by the Pakistani authorities, Afghans retain these cities as prominent places in their self-understandings and personal histories. It is through collective struggles in the city and shared relations that sentiments and structures of home have been made. Afghans have contributed toward Pakistan's urban transformation: they have quite literally made Pakistani cities. And Pakistan's cities too, have created new identities that are more inclusive than that of the nation. The jingoistic rhetoric of the nation and regional conflicts might depict warring nations, but examining the city tells another story, of the shared struggles and shared rights of ordinary people. How long this can stand up against a growing agenda of securitization and continued efforts of the Pakistani state to intervene in Afghanistan remains to be seen. Yet it is clear, for many Afghans the cities of Pakistan are home.



## EPILOGUE

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A mother gives me her *chador*. Her son has asked me to bring it with me to Europe. It's been five years since he has seen her. He wants to smell her. Embrace her. Pray on the fabric that touched her skin. To feel safe. He hasn't felt safe in these years. He's worked in factories, restaurants, and on market stalls. He's been a cleaner at night. He's walked for days to cross borders. He's slept scared at night, sharing rooms with older men he didn't know but were working as laborers in the same town. He's crossed seas in pathetic vessels to reach Europe. The last time we met he was a teenager who had barely set foot beyond his neighborhood. It was hot in Karachi that day. Today we are on a bench near the entrance to a park in a small European town. It is a cold night. He looks at me and says, "I have aged in these years." There is a sad smile in his voice.

His mother tells me to kiss both of his eyes when I see her son. She holds my hand and embraces me so tightly, as if he is in my body. She says, again and again, "Kiss my son on his eyes when you see him. Kiss him from me. Don't forget. Kiss my son." She holds her breath, holds back tears.

His sisters pack a box of gifts for him. Lots of single wrapped sweets and salty snacks you can find in the shop near their house; pens wrapped in a red velvet box; a diary for him to write in. Wrapped in a box covered in pink wrapping paper and with a plastic flower placed on top, the gift seems as excited as his sisters.

In Karachi his father tells me both his sons have gone. We'd last met five years ago when the family unit was undivided. "You thought only one had gone, didn't you? There is nothing left for them here." I would meet their youngest in Europe after this visit. He gives me two old watches to take to his sons. He looks at his wife. "She is no longer the same." She's leaning against the door; the sun is setting. She calls her sons' names silently, wincing. He tells me of the pain that comes from knowing how his children have suffered. He beats his chest with his fist. "If the pain of my heart comes out, I will lose my mind." In the story of Yaqub (Jacob) and Yusuf (Joseph), Yaqub is so

overwhelmed with grief at his son Yusuf's disappearance that he cries until he is blind. In the story of Musa (Moses), when his mother places her baby in the river in order to save his life, her heart suffers in indescribable agony. Their presence seems to be in the room.

Caught in an overturned boat in Turkish waters, their eldest son narrowly escaped death. With darkness encompassing, water engulfed the vessel. He reached the shore—drenched, frozen, unsure whether he was alive or dead. That lucky night he called out for his father. "I am alive, Baba. Did you pray for me? I thought I was dead. I am alive." He travels across Europe and finally settles in one place, navigating complex bureaucracy, working to prove himself a "good migrant." He is not a citizen yet. But he will be soon, he is sure of it.

The sisters give me a book of prayers to keep their brothers safe in faraway lands. Imam Ali's words stare up from the page. "*Ghurbat insan ko apne hi shehr me ajnabi bana de ta hain*" (Poverty makes one a foreigner in their own home).

I give the eldest son his gifts. He smells the *chador*, inhaling deeply. He kisses the book. Later, we return from a play at a church he has joined. Locals, including his teachers, say Christianity will help him integrate in Europe. They mistake me for his sister and reassure me that Jesus will save me too, just as he has saved my brother. When we are sitting on the bench, I'm wondering if he has undergone a religious conversion. He is holding his book of prayers tightly. "*Ya Ali, madad*," he sighs. We are silent.

The youngest is not faring so well. He doesn't meet many kind people along the way. He crosses from Turkey to Greece many times—captain of a rubber boat with a barely working motor. You're classed a smuggler if you get caught, the risk is high, but so is the pay. He only stops when he nearly dies. He can't swim, he doesn't want to tempt fate, again.

He cuts his arms and wrists with a blade until he is hospitalized. Refusing to eat, he is drawn by death, the great escape. Pain brings sensation, interrupting the numbness of trauma. He was twelve years of age when he left Karachi, much younger than his brother. Social workers struggle to penetrate his blank exterior. They say he is nice enough, but they don't understand why he doesn't listen. Doctors x-ray his bones. Not to check his health, but to see if he is eligible for deportation. The authorities think he is lying about his age. First, they house him with other adult male asylum seekers. He stays out of the house as much as possible. He doesn't have a proper coat though, and it's cold. He loiters in shops, bus and train stations, the library, anywhere that is dry and warm. Sometimes he gets told to move. Sometimes people

get irritated. Sometimes they shout, sometimes they mutter, “*Ausländer*.” He didn’t know what the word meant at first. Now it is familiar.

In Karachi his father tells me: “We had to send them, and they wanted to go. What could we do? They are killing our people [Shi’a]. They killed children in our neighbourhood. Shot a six-year-old boy at point-blank range. What do you think they will they do to teenagers and men? They killed my friend. They killed a doctor. They killed a man in his thirties.” He carries on listing names of people. I can’t keep up.

The father moved from Afghanistan to Pakistan in 1978, first living in small towns in the northwest, then moving to Karachi. He met his wife through a family connection in the city. Gradually, they built a house on the outskirts of the city, contributing to its horizontal expansion through informal settlements. Their children were born in Karachi. They went to school in their neighborhood. They speak Urdu, Farsi, and some English. The two sons who left now also speak Turkish, French, and German. For them Karachi is a place they long for and call home.

The youngest says he can’t take it anymore. The isolation is too much. He misses his mother. His sisters. The neighborhood. “Do you think I can go back, just to see them?” he asks me. “But then I’ll have to go through it all again to get back here.” He’s fallen in love; she is a friend of his sisters in Karachi. They talk on *WhatsApp* and *Messenger*. They are engaged, but the families don’t know yet. He’s stuck, waiting to get his papers. He’s doing better now than before. After fifteen months he’s moved into a house with other teenagers. He’s playing football, taking day trips with friends he’s made, and trying to study. But he won’t study much longer, he says, “I need to make money.”

He wonders if the authorities will send him to Afghanistan, they sent his friend from Peshawar back. “He’d never even been to Afghanistan. I’ve never been. How can they send us there?” He pauses, “They are also telling Afghans to leave Pakistan. I think it is getting worse. But they cannot do that to us. When I get my papers here, I will go back to my family in Karachi.”



## NOTES

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### Introduction

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## Chapter 1

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Sayyaf; Harakat-e-Inqilab-e-Islami, led by Maulana Mohammadi; Mahaz-e-Milli-Islami-ye-Afghanistan, led by Sayyid Ahmed Gilani. Another party, the Shia Hazara Hezb-e-Wahdat was led by Abdul Ali Mazari and based and backed out of Iran.

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57. United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, "Report No. 11," Islamabad, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford, 12; GOP and UNHCR-PK, 1982 Material Assistance Agreement, Document Reference No. 82/AP/PAK/M17, Islamabad, 1982, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre Archive.

58. United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, "Report No.11," 12.

59. Antonio Donini, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Integration or Independence of Humanitarian Action?" *International Review of the Red Cross*, 93: 881 (2011), 144.

60. Ibid., 144.

61. Khan, "The Legal Environment in Pakistan for Registered Afghans," 107–110.

62. CCAR was established at the federal level in 1979 with its headquarters in Islamabad. CCAR's provincial offices in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Quetta, Balochistan, were also established in 1979. The Lahore, Punjab, office was set up in 1982, and the Karachi, Sindh, office in 2003. Until 2013 all CCAR offices worked under the policy direction of the Ministry of SAFRON and in collaboration with UNHCR. Since 2013, CCAR has been an independent government department.

63. Liisa Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology*, 11: 3 (1996), 377–404.

64. United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, "Report No. 9"

65. SAFRON and CCAR, "Official (Revised) Handbook," 56; United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, "Report No. 9"

66. SAFRON and CCAR, "Official (Revised) Handbook."

67. At the university level Afghans were reserved eight seats in medicine, one seat in dentistry, one seat in pharmacy, and one in engineering. Any admissions into professional colleges/universities were meant to be forwarded to CCAR via the Provincial Refugee Commissioner. See SAFRON and CCAR, "Official (Revised) Handbook," 52.

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83. Tahir, “The Containment Zone”; Sanaa Alimia, “On Discrimination Against Pashtuns: Reflections from Peshawar,” *Tanqeed*, 9 (Summer, 2015).

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88. Historically, there have been many grassroots campaigns in FATA calling for full political recognition, but it was state security interests and not a democratic inclination that drove the decision to end the FCR. As critics of the state point out, such as the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (a grassroots, mass social movement that emerged from the former FATA), it will take years to undo the structural inequalities and discrimination faced by Pashtuns as a result of the FCR and nature of the postcolonial state.

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## Chapter 2

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2. United Nations Population Division, “Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2017,” 2018, accessed 4 April 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/mortality/child-mortality-report-2017.asp>.

3. Details taken from field observations.

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5. Interviews: KHA05.
6. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Boston: Grove Press, 1963, 42.
7. Serendipitously, a carpet-weaving family already knew my Pakistani *khalu* (uncle) (my mother's sister's husband), a carpet trader who, in the late 1980s, had done some business with them.
8. Interviews: Aga Jaan Akhtar, Commissioner, CCAR in Sindh and Secretary to Government of Sindh, Karachi, 27 September 2010 and 20 October 2010; Agha Azam, Afghan Refugees Repatriation Cell [ARRC], Karachi, October 2010 to December 2010, June 2011, April 2013; Ahmad Khaliqyar, Afghan Counsel General, Embassy of Afghanistan in Karachi, Karachi 16 October 2010; Dr. Imran Zeb, Chief Commissioner; United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, Field Officer, Karachi, October 2011 to December 2011, June 2011 [Name withheld]; Fida Wazir, Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Islamabad, 15 February 2011; Sikandar Mehmood, Karachi Suboffice, Society for Human Aid and Prisoners' Rights, Karachi, 6 October 2010, 15 October 2010, 21 October 2010, and 4 November 2010; Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre [MALC] 01, Finance Department, Karachi, June 2011, March 2013 [Name withheld]; MALC 02, Field Officer, Karachi, October 2011 to December 2011 [Name withheld].
9. Arif Hasan and Mansoor Raza, *Migration and Small Towns in Pakistan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011, 5.
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11. Ibid.
12. Interview: Dr. Imran Zeb, Chief Commissioner, CCAR.
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of Karachi. See CCAR, “Afghan Refugees Registered Population in Pakistan: Statistics January 1986 to December 1987,” Islamabad, 1987, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford, Archive.

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27. Laurent Gayer, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City*, London: Hurst, 2014, 43–44.

28. Farhat Haq, “Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization,” *Asian Survey*, 35: 11 (1995), 990–1004; Farida Shaheed, “The Pathan-Muhajir Conflicts, 1985–6: A National Perspective,” in *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*, ed. Veena Das, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, 195–214; Akmal Hussain, “The Karachi Riots of December 1986: Crisis of State and Civil Society in Pakistan,” in *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*, ed. Veena Das, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 185–193.

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30. Ibid., 294–295; Haq, “Rise of the MQM”; Shaheed, “The Pathan-Muhajir Conflicts 1985–6”; Hussain, “The Karachi Riots.”

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32. Interview: KHA08.

33. Interview: KHA15.

34. Interview: KHA14.

35. Interview: KHA08.

36. Ibid.

37. Interview: KHA04.

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41. Turner, “What Is a Refugee Camp?”

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43. Interview: KHA08.

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45. Huma Yusuf, *Conflict Dynamics in Karachi*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2012, 8.

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47. Interview: KHAP21.

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50. UNHCR, Karachi suboffice, “Profile of [redacted]: Largest and Oldest [redacted/name of refugee area] in Karachi,” Bilal Agha, Repatriation Unit, UNHCR Field Office, Karachi, private archive; “Update on [redacted/name of refugee area],” Bilal Agha, Repatriation Unit, UNHCR Field Office, Karachi, private archive.



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78. Interview: KHA04, KHA05.



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88. Interview: KHA05.

89. Interview: KHA17.

### Chapter 3

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4. Interviews: KHP05; KHP06.

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14. Ibid.

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22. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 39–40.
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24. WikiLeaks, 28 May 2009, Ref ID: 09ISLAMABAD1166. Confidential.
25. Hasan, "Anti-Poor Bias in Policy."
26. Anwar and Viqar, "Producing Cosmopolitan Karachi."
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28. Younus, "Pakistan: Forced Evictions," 3–4.
29. Ibid.
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32. Laurent Gayer, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City*, London: Hurst, 2014; Arif Hasan, *Participatory Development: The Story of the Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute and the Urban Resource Centre*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010.
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42. Interview: KHP10.
43. Interview: KHP17.
44. Group interview: Ishtiaq Goth 02.

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51. Interview: KHP11.

52. Bayat, *Life as Politics*.

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56. Group interview: Ishtiaq Goth 01, KHP13.

57. Group Interview: Ishtiaq Goth 01, KHP04.

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61. Group Interview: Ishtiaq Goth 01, KHP04.

## Chapter 4

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9. Banerjee, *Pathan Unarmed*, 31.

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22. SAFRON, UNHCR-PK, BEFARE, and EBDM, “Population Profiling, Verification and Response (PPVR),” 33.

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24. These figures do not account for those who move through well-established social networks and recruiting and travel agents; they also do not account for Afghan migration from Pakistan (some Afghans come to Peshawar from Afghanistan specifically with the intention of migrating onward to the Gulf Arab region).

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37. Ibid.

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39. Mosel and Jackson, “Sanctuary in the City,” 14–15.

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42. Abubakar Siddique, *The Pashtun Question: The Unresolved Key to the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan*, London: Hurst, 2014.

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44. Departments in charge of housing include the Provincial Housing Authority, the City District Government, Town Municipal Authorities (TMAs) established in 2001 under the (now reversed) Local Government Ordinance, and the PDA, the latter of which generates its own funds and is responsible for Hayatabad and other large housing and infrastructure schemes on the outskirts of the city.

On 1 January 2013, “the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government passed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act, which abolished the TMAs and revives the Peshawar Municipal Corporation, with overall jurisdiction over the four towns. However, the government does not appear to be adequately prepared for this change and it may take significant time to enact.”

In practice, each department or entity, including the PDA, develops their own projects, which are overseen by the Provincial Housing Department (PHD), which manage this process with limited authority.

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51. Interview: PEA24.

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58. Interview: PEA01, PEA03, PEA07, PEA10, PEA17, PEA22. See also Morton, “Afghan Refugees as Casual Labourers.”

59. Interview: PEA22.

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61. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

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68. Interview: PEA25.
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80. Ibid.
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## Chapter 5

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4. Torpey, *Invention of the Passport*.
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44. Interview: KHA22.

45. Alimia, “Performing the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border.”

46. As well as ID cards for Afghans (POR and ACCE), Pakistanis (the CNIC), and foreign nationals (NARA) other projects listed on the NADRA website include: Biometric Verification Services, Civil Registration Management System, Arms License (Punjab, Sindh, Federal), Pension and Zakat Disbursement System, SMS Services (7000, 8400, 8300, 8500), INGO Registration, Safe City, Kiosk and e-Sahulat, Integrated Border Management System, Pakistan Electoral Rolls, Vehicle Registration Card (ETO—Islamabad), E-Toll Collection System, Frontier Corps Cards Production, Prime Minister Health Program, Machine Readable Passports/Visa, Benazir Income Support Program, Temporary Displaced Person (FATA), Watan Card, Punjab Kissan and Imdadi Package (KPIP), Earthquake Relief, and NADRA Office Locator (Mobile App).

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### Conclusion

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#### Key

EU: Europe.  
PE: Peshawar.  
KH: Karachi.  
P: Pakistani.  
A: Afghan.  
Number: Individual reference.  
Pseudonym (where relevant).

#### Afghans in Peshawar

- PEA01. Engineer Aziz. Male. Age: 60. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1979. Housing type: refugee camp. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor; former mujahidin member. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2011, 2013–2015.
- PEA02. Haji Khayruddin. Male. Age: 60. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Paktia. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1976–1978. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: regional trade (car parts). ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: unknown. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013–2014.
- PEA03. Male. Age: 62. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1978. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: teacher (retired); former translator for NGOs and mujahidin parties. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long). 2011.
- PEA04. Nawar Saleh. PXA110. Male. Age: 55. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: unknown. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: NGO: educationist. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013.
- PEA05. Haji Faris. Male. Age: 70. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Paktia. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1981. Housing type: UNHCR refugee camp. Paid employment: primary school principal; former mujahidin member. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2011, 2014.

- PEA06. Male. Age: 70. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1981. Housing type: UNHCR refugee camp. Paid employment: none (elderly/ill); former mujahidin member. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (repeat, long). 2011.
- PEA07. Male. Age: 68. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1979. Housing type: UNHCR refugee camp. Paid employment: former mujahidin member; former daily wage laborer. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (long). 2011.
- PEA08. Male. Age: 65. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul (province). Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1979. Housing type: UNHCR refugee camp. Paid employment: none; former mujahidin member; former daily wage laborer. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (long). 2011.
- PEA09. Male. Age: 66. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Loghar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1979. Housing type: UNHCR refugee camp. Paid employment: former mujahidin member. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (long). 2011.
- PEA10. Male. Age: 50. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Laghman. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (short). 2011.
- PEA11. Male. Age: 45. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1981. Housing type: refugee camp. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor; former mujahidin. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (short). 2011.
- PEA12. Palwasha. Female. Age: 60. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1976. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: none. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013.
- PEA13. (PEA12 son). Male. Age: 39. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1976. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013.
- PEA14. (PEA12 son). Male. Age: 35. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1976 (parents); born in Pakistan. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013.
- PEA15. Safdar. Male. Age: 40. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1981. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2011, 2013.
- PEA16. Shamsa. Female. Age: 28. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1994. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: scavenger (husband drug addict). ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2011.

- PEA17. Nowroz. Male. Age: 50. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor; former mujahidin low-rank soldier. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2011, 2013.
- PEA18. Yumna (PEA17 wife). Female. Age: 49. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: daily (wage) labor. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2011, 2013.
- PEA19. Asfandyar. Male. Age: 51. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1992. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: retired/daily (wage) labor. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2011, 2013.
- PEA20. Ilyas (PEA19 son). Male. Age: 21. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1992. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: teacher/student (unpaid). ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2011.
- PEA21. Male. Age: 68. Arab/Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1979. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: retired. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (short). 2011.
- PEA22. Ibrahim Hafiz. Male. Age: 50. Arab/Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1982. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: business. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2011.
- PEA23. (PEA22 son). Male. Age: 30. Arab/Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1982. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: business. ID card status: POR cardholder. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (long). 2011.
- PEA24. Male. Age: 63. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: refugee camp. Paid employment: school principal. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long). 2011.
- PEA25. Male. Age: 60. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Laghman. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1985 (parents); born in Pakistan. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: unemployed; daily (wage) labor; disabled. ID card status: undocumented. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (short); group interview (short); 2011, 2013.
- PEA26. Male. Age: 42. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1982. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: office work. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2015–2017.
- PEA27. Female. Age: 23. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul (city). Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1992 (parents), born in Pakistan. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment:

- student. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long, repeat). 2014–2017.
- PEA28. Male. Age: 24. Origin in Afghanistan: Badakhshan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980 (parents), born in Pakistan. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: mechanic. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (long). 2017.
- PEA29. Male. Age: 28. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul (city). Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1994. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: teaching. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar and online: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011–2017.
- PEA30. Male. Age: 22. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1995. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: teacher/student (unpaid). ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (short, repeat). 2011, 2013.
- PEA31. Female. Age: 21. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1992 (parents), born in Pakistan. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: unemployed. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews. 2011, 2015–2017.
- PEA32. Male. Age: 19. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1992 (parents), born in Pakistan. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: unemployed. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews. 2011, 2013, 2016.
- PEA33. Zalan. Male. Age: 35. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1988. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: laborer. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview, 2011, 2013, 2016.
- PEA34. Male. Age: 58. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: business. ID card status: unclear. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interviews (repeat), 2013–2015.
- PEA35. Male. Age: 55. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Badakhshan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1982. Housing type: rental, formal housing. Paid employment: laborer. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: group individual interview, 2013–2015.
- PEA36. Male. Age: 62. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Badakhshan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1982. Housing type: rental, formal housing. Paid employment: driver. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (repeat), 2013–2015.
- PEA37. Nurjahan. Female. Age: 50. Farsiwan. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1992. Housing type: rental, formal housing. Paid employment: none. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interviews (repeat, long). 2011, 2013.

PEA38. Male. Age: 37. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Nangarhar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1997. Housing type: rental, informal housing. Paid employment: student. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview, 2015–2017.

#### Pakistanis in Peshawar

PEP01. Yasir. Male. Age: 46. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: mechanic. CNIC holder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews (long). 2011, 2013.

PEP02. Female. (PEP01 wife). Age: 32. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: mechanic. CNIC holder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual and group interviews (long). 2011.

PEP03. Nadim. Male. Age: 35. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: informal housing, ownership. Paid employment: middleman; local trade. ID card status: CNIC holder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interviews (repeat, short). 2011, 2013.

PEP04. Wajid. Male. Age: 38. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: informal housing, ownership. Paid employment: middleman; local trade. ID card status: CNIC holder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interviews (repeat, short). 2011.

PEP05. Mustafa Jamal. Male. Age: 50 Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: formal housing, ownership. Paid employment: small landholder; property developer. ID card status: CNIC holder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interviews (repeat, short). 2011, 2013.

PEP06. Male. Age: 38. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: formal and informal housing, owned. Paid employment: small landholder, business. ID card status: CNIC holder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: group interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013.

PEP07. Male. Age: 58. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: small landholder. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2018.

PEP08. Female. Age: 47. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: small landholder. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2018.

- PEP09. Male. Age: 32. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: South Waziristan (former FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 2011. Housing type: formal housing, rented. Paid employment: government college teacher. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2013–2016.
- PEP10. Male. Age: 28. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Bajaur (former FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 2005. Housing type: formal housing, rented. Paid employment: university teacher. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2013–2016.
- PEP11. Female. Age: 28. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 2005. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: project manager. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2017.
- PEP12. Male. Age: 57. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar (district), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: N/A. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: landholder/rental. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2015–2017.
- PEP13. Male. Age: 61. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Khyber district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 1977. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: property rentals. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2018.
- PEP14. Male. Age 33. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Mohmand district (former FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 2008. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: student. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2018.
- PEP15. Female. Age: 49. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 1978. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: teacher. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2018.
- PEP16. Female. Age: 44. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Kohat. Date of first migration to Peshawar: 1991. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: receptionist. ID card status: CNIC card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2017–2018.
- PEP17. Babar. Male. Age: 36. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: North Waziristan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 2014. Housing type: formal housing, rented. Paid employment: trader. Interviewed in Peshawar: individual interview (repeat, long). 2016–2018.

#### Afghans in Karachi

- KHA01. Male. Age: 17. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 2000. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: street vendor; student (unpaid). ID card status: undocumented. Directly affected by harassment or violence

- by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi and via Skype: individual interview (repeat, long). 2010–2018.
- KHA02. (KHA01 brother). Male. Age: 13. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 2000. Housing type: informal housing, rental. Paid employment: street vendor; student. ID card status: undocumented. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview (repeat, long). 2010–2012.
- KHA03. Male. Age: 50. Hazara. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: NGO worker. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi and online: individual interview (long, repeat). 2010–2011, 2013–2018.
- KHA04. Yaqub Gul. Male. Age: 32. Uzbek. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: local trade. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi and online: individual and group interviews (long, repeat). 2010–2016.
- KHA05. Habibullah. Male. Age: 40. Uzbek. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunduz. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: local trade; daily labor. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (long, repeat). 2010–2011 and 2013–2016.
- KHA06. Gulshin (KHA05 daughter). Female. Age: 24. Uzbek. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunduz. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983 (parents); born in Pakistan. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: no. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (long, repeat). 2010–2011 and 2013.
- KHA07. Female. Age: 50. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Herat. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 2007. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: ragpicker. ID card status: undocumented—no documents. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (repeat, short). 2010–2011, 2013.
- KHA08. Rostam. Male. Age: 40. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: business: fabric wholesale. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2017.
- KHA09. (KHA08 brother). Male. Age: 37. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: business: fabric wholesale. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2017.
- KHA10. Male. Age: 47. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Qandahar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 2003. Housing type: informal, squatter. Paid employment: unemployed/scavenger. ID card status: None. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview 2010–2011, 2013.



- KHA11. Male. Age: 27. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Unknown. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1965 (parents)—born in Pakistan. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: business: shopkeeper. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2014–2015.
- KHA12. Male. Age: 35. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Jalalabad. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1958–1960; born in Karachi, Pakistan. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: salesman (women's fabric.) ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi. Individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2014.
- KHA13. Male. Age: 26. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Qandahar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983 (parents); born in Pakistan. Housing type: formal housing, owned. Paid employment: business: wholesaler (fabric). ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013.
- KHA14. Maulana Abdul Qais. Male. Age: 48. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Unknown. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: trade (Afghanistan-Pakistan); land in Afghanistan: ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2014.
- KHA15. Haji Hayat. Male. Age: 50. Uzbek. Origin in Afghanistan: Unknown. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: trade (Afghanistan-Pakistan); land in Afghanistan: ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011.
- KHA16. Haji Turaj. Male. Age: 66. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Unknown. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: trade (Afghanistan-Pakistan); land in Afghanistan; former mujahidin member. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interviews (repeat, long). 2010, 2013.
- KHA17. Ahmed. Male. Age: 29. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul (city). Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1993. Housing type: formal housing, rental. Paid employment: unemployed. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi and online: individual interview (repeat, long). 2011, 2013–2016.
- KHA18. Haji Mahfuz. Male. Age: 45. Uzbek. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1980. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: local trade. ID card status: POR cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi, cell phone, and Skype: individual and group interviews (long, repeat). 2010–2016.
- KHA19. Male. Age: 60. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunduz. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 2005. Housing type: informal refugee camp. Paid employment: paralyzed. ID card status: undocumented—no documents. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013.



- KHA20. Male. Age 35. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Paktia. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1960. Housing type: informal, owned. Paid employment: shopkeeper. ID card status: Pakistani CNIC. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (repeat, long), individual interview 2010–2011, 2013–2015.
- KHA21. Shahab. Male. Age: 37. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunduz. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983. Housing type: informal, owned. Paid employment: sales assistant. ID card status: Pakistani CNIC. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013, 2016–2017.
- KHA22. Female. Age: 28. Hazara. Origin in Afghanistan: Kabul. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1998. Housing type: formal, rental. Paid employment: unemployed. ID card status: POR. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (long), 2011.
- KHA23. Hamza. Male. Age: 35. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Qandahar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1960s (parents). Housing type: informal, owned. Paid employment: sales assistant. ID card status: Pakistani CNIC. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interview (repeat, long), 2010–2011, 2013, 2017.
- KHA24. Matiullah. Male. Age: 28. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Qandahar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1970 (parents). Housing type: informal, owned. Paid employment: sales assistant. ID card status: POR card. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long), 2011, 2014–2015.

#### Pakistanis in Karachi

- KHP01. Spogmai. Female. Age: 27. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: North Waziristan (former FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1996. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: housewife; volunteer, medical clinic. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interview (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2015–2016.
- KHP02. Male. Age 35. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1999. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: yes; fabric store. ID card: ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi, Swabi, Peshawar, and online: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2018.
- KHP03. Male. Age: 22. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1999. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: yes; fabric store. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi, Swabi, Peshawar, and online: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2018.
- KHP04. Bilqis. Female. Age: 27. Sindhi. Origin in Pakistan: Interior Sindh. Date of first migration to Karachi: unknown. Housing type: informal housing, squatter/rental. Paid employment: No. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence

- by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interview (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2014.
- KHP05. Ishtiaq. Male. Age: 45. Sindhi. Origin in Pakistan: Karachi (rural, North Karachi), Sindh. Date of first migration to Karachi: N/A. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: landholder/property developer. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013.
- KHP06. Omar Tariq. Male. Age: 38. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1960 (parents); born in Karachi. Housing type: formal housing, owned (upgraded informal house). Paid employment: property dealer; middleman. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2014.
- KHP07. (KHP06 wife). Female. Age: 34. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1960 (parents); born in Karachi. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: housewife. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2014.
- KHP08. (KHP06 mother). Female. Age: 65. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1960. Housing type: informal housing, owned (upgraded informal house). Paid employment: widow. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (repeat, long). 2010, 2013.
- KHP09. (KHP06 father-in-law). Male. Age: 70. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1960. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: street vendor: vegetable cart. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: no. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2013–2014.
- KHP10. Maqsud. Male. Age: 30. Sindhi. Origin in Pakistan: Interior Sindh. Date of first migration to Karachi: 2010. Housing type: informal housing, rental/squatter. Paid employment: factory worker. ID card status: undocumented. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview (short). 2010.
- KHP11. Female. Age: 60. Sindhi. Origin in Pakistan: unknown. Date of first migration to Karachi: unknown. Housing type: informal housing, squatter/owned. Paid employment: No. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview (short). 2010.
- KHP12. Tabassum Khala. Female. Age: 50. “Urdu-speaking.” Origin in Pakistan: Karachi, Sindh. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1947 (parents from India). Housing type: informal housing, rental/squatter. Paid employment: unemployed. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interview (repeat, long). 2010, 2013.
- KHP13. Fahmida. Female. Age: 45. Kashmiri. Origin in Pakistan: Pakistan Administered Kashmir. Date of first migration to Karachi: unknown; born in Karachi. Housing type: informal housing, squatter/rental. Paid employment: No. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interviews (long). 2010–2011.

- KHP14. Zinat. Female. Age: 33. Baloch. Origin in Pakistan: unknown. Date of first migration to Karachi: unknown; born in Karachi. Housing type: informal housing, squatter/free. Paid employment: No. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: group interview (long). 2010.
- KHP15. Female. Age: 23. Punjabi. Origin in Pakistan: Punjab. Date of first migration to Karachi: 2010. Housing type: informal housing, squatter. Paid employment: No. ID card status: undocumented. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi and on cell phone: individual and group interview (long). 2010, 2012–2013.
- KHP16. Female. Age: 19. Punjabi. Origin in Pakistan: Punjab. Date of first migration to Karachi: 2010. Housing type: informal housing, squatter. Paid employment: No. ID card status: undocumented. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual and group interview (long). 2010.
- KHP17. Gul Nabi. Male. Age: 65. Punjabi. Origin in Pakistan: Hyderabad, Sindh. Date of first migration to Karachi: 2010. Housing type: informal housing, squatter. Paid employment: Yes; daily labor. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interview (long). 2010, 2012–2013.
- KHP18. Female. Age: 28. Saraiki. Origin in Pakistan: unknown. Date of first migration to Karachi: unknown. Housing type: informal housing, squatter/rental. Paid employment: none. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: group interviews (short). 2010.
- KHP19. Group interviews. Property developers. Karachi. June 2014.
- KHP20. Samin (KHP01 sister). Age: 33. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: North Waziristan (former FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1996. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: housewife. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: group interviews (repeat, long), 2011, 2015.
- KHP21. Muzammil. Age: 13. Pashtun. Origin in Pakistan: Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Date of first migration to Karachi: 1996. Housing type: informal housing, owned. Paid employment: student. ID card status: N/A. Directly affected by harassment or violence by law enforcement agencies: yes. Interviewed in Karachi: individual interviews (repeat, long). 2010–2011, 2014.

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- Ishtiaq Goth 01. Group interview. Karachi. 2010.
- Ishtiaq Goth 02. Group interview. Group interview. Karachi. 2010.

#### Afghans and Pakistanis in Europe

- EUA01. (PEA1 son). Male: Age 30. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunar. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1979. Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar. Date of migration to Europe: 2014. Paid employment: student. Interviewed in Germany: individual interviews, 2015, 2016.
- EUA02. (KHA03 son). Male: Age 18. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1993 (parents). Origin in Pakistan: Karachi. Date of migration to Europe: 2015. Interviewed in Germany: individual interviews (repeat, long), 2015–2018.

- EUA03. Female: Age 28. Tajik. Origin in Afghanistan: Baghlan: Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1993 (parents). Origin in Pakistan: Peshawar. Date of migration to Europe: 2015. Paid employment: none. ID card status: CNIC cardholder. Interviewed in Germany: individual interviews (repeat, long), 2016–2017.
- EUA04. Male: Age 22. Pashtun. Origin in Afghanistan: Qandahar: Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1985 (parents). Origin in Pakistan: Karachi. Date of migration to Europe: 2015. Interviewed in France: individual interviews (repeat, long), 2015–2018.
- EUA05. Male: Age: 46. Uzbek. Origin in Afghanistan: Kunduz. Date of first migration to Pakistan: 1983. Origin in Pakistan: Karachi. Date of migration to Europe: 2015. Paid employment: none. Interviewed in Germany: individual interviews, 2015, 2016.

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- Akhtar, Aga Jaan, Commissioner, CCAR, Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees in Sindh, Secretary to Government of Sindh, Agriculture Department, Karachi, 27 September 2010 and 20 October 2010.
- Amin, Muhammad, Manager Programme and Development at Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Peshawar, 7 February 2011, 14 February 2011, 1 October 2015.
- Azam, Agha, Afghan Refugees Repatriation Cell, Karachi, repeat interviews and discussions, October 2010 to December 2010, June 2011, April 2013.
- City District Government Karachi 01, Field Officer, Katchi Abadi Section, repeat interviews November 2010.
- City District Government Karachi 02, Adviser, repeat interviews November 2010 to June 2011.
- Darwaish, Mohammad, Afghan Hazara elder and representative to FOCUS, Agha Khan Development Network, Karachi, 12 November 2010.
- Education Attaché, Afghan Consulate, Peshawar, 16 March 2011.
- Habib, Rana Asif, Director of Initiator Human Development Foundation, Karachi, 27 October 2010.
- Hai, Abdul, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Karachi, 11 October 2010.
- Hanne, Dr. Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre, Karachi, Karachi, 5 November 2010.
- Hasan, Arif, Personal Offices, Karachi, May 2015.
- Hasan, Kashif, Committee for Monitoring and Improvement of City District Government, Karachi Schools, City District Government Karachi, Karachi, 12 October 2010.
- Hussain, Syed Ashfaq, Secretary to Administrator, City District Government Karachi, Karachi, 12 October 2010 and 14 October 2010.
- Independent Human Rights Lawyer, Peshawar, repeat interviews, March 2011, September 2013 to November 2013 [name withheld].
- Independent Human Rights Lawyer, Peshawar, repeat interviews, October 2013 to January 2014; May 2015 [name withheld].
- Independent Doctor, Peshawar, Khyber Medical College, repeat interviews, September 2013–December 2013; January 2016.
- Independent Doctors (group interview), Peshawar, 17 January 2016.
- Independent Psychiatrist, Peshawar, repeat interviews, September 2013–December 2013; May 2015; August 2017; June 2018 [name withheld].
- Khaliqyar, Ahmad, Afghan Counsel General, Embassy of Afghanistan in Karachi, Karachi, 16 October 2010.
- Khattak, Azad Khan, Project Manager, Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Peshawar, 14 April 2011.

- Khybari, Ajmal, Deputy High Commissioner, United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, Islamabad, 11 February 2011 and 13 May 2011.
- Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre 01, Finance Department, Karachi, repeat interviews and discussions, June 2011, March 2013 [name withheld].
- Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre 02, Field Officer, Karachi, repeat interviews and discussions, October 2011 to December 2011 [name withheld].
- Maroof, Waqaar, Additional Commissioner, Commissioner for Afghan Refugee Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar, 9 March 2011, 16 March 2011, 9 April 2011, and 3 October 2015.
- Mehmood, Sikandar, Manager Karachi Suboffice, Society for Human Aid and Prisoners' Rights, Karachi, 6 October 2010, 15 October 2010, 21 October 2010, and 4 November 2010.
- Ministry for Refugee Repatriation, Government of Afghanistan, Project Coordinator, Islamabad, 24 February 2010 [name withheld].
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- National Database and Registration Authority 02, Line Manager, Proof of Registration Card Registration Centre, Karachi, 13 October 2010 [name withheld].
- National Database and Registration Authority 03, Former Registration Manager, Proof of Registration Card and Computerized National Identity Card, Peshawar, 8 March 2011, 15 April 2011, and 17 April 2011 [name withheld].
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- National Database and Registration Authority 05, CNIC Data Processor, POR Card Registration Centre, Peshawar, 15 April 2011, 17 April 2011, 20 October 2013 [name withheld].
- Parveen, Shahida, Lawyer, Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid, Karachi, 9 November 2010 and 14 November 2010.
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- Sherzai, Mohammad Saleh, Acting Afghan Counsel General, Embassy of Afghanistan in Peshawar, Peshawar, 16 March 2011, 21 April 2011.
- Shoaib, Mohammad, Field Coordinator: I Own Karachi Project, City District Government Karachi, Karachi, 3 November 2010 and 29 November 2010.
- Siddiqi, Qaiser, Countrywide Director, Society for Human and Prisoner Rights, Islamabad, 9 February 2011 and 12 May 2011.
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- Society for Human and Prisoner Rights 02, Field Officer, Karachi, repeat interviews, June 2013 to December 2013 [name withheld].
- Society for Human and Prisoner Rights 03, Project Director, Islamabad, May 2015.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Pakistan, Field Officer, Karachi, repeat interviews, October 2011 to December 2011, June 2011 [name withheld].
- Wazir, Fida, Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, Islamabad, 15 February 2011.
- Zafar, Dr. Shahid, Medical Coordinator, Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre, Karachi, 28 October 2010, 7 June 2011, 29 March 2012.
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